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MAHATMA

LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

HE stopped at the thresholds of the huts of the thousands of dispossessed, dressed like one of their own. He spoke to them in their own language. Here was living truth at last, and not only quotations from books. For this reason the Mahatma, the name given to him by the people of India, is his real name. Who else has felt like him that all Indians are his own flesh and blood? When love came to the door of India, that door was opened wide. At Gandhi's call India blossomed forth to new greatness, just as once before, in earlier times, when Buddha proclaimed the truth of fellow-feeling and compassion among all living creatures.

Rabindranath Tagore

310

MAHATMA

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

Volume III

PUBLISHED BY
VITHALBHAI K. JHAVERI & D. G. TENDULKAR
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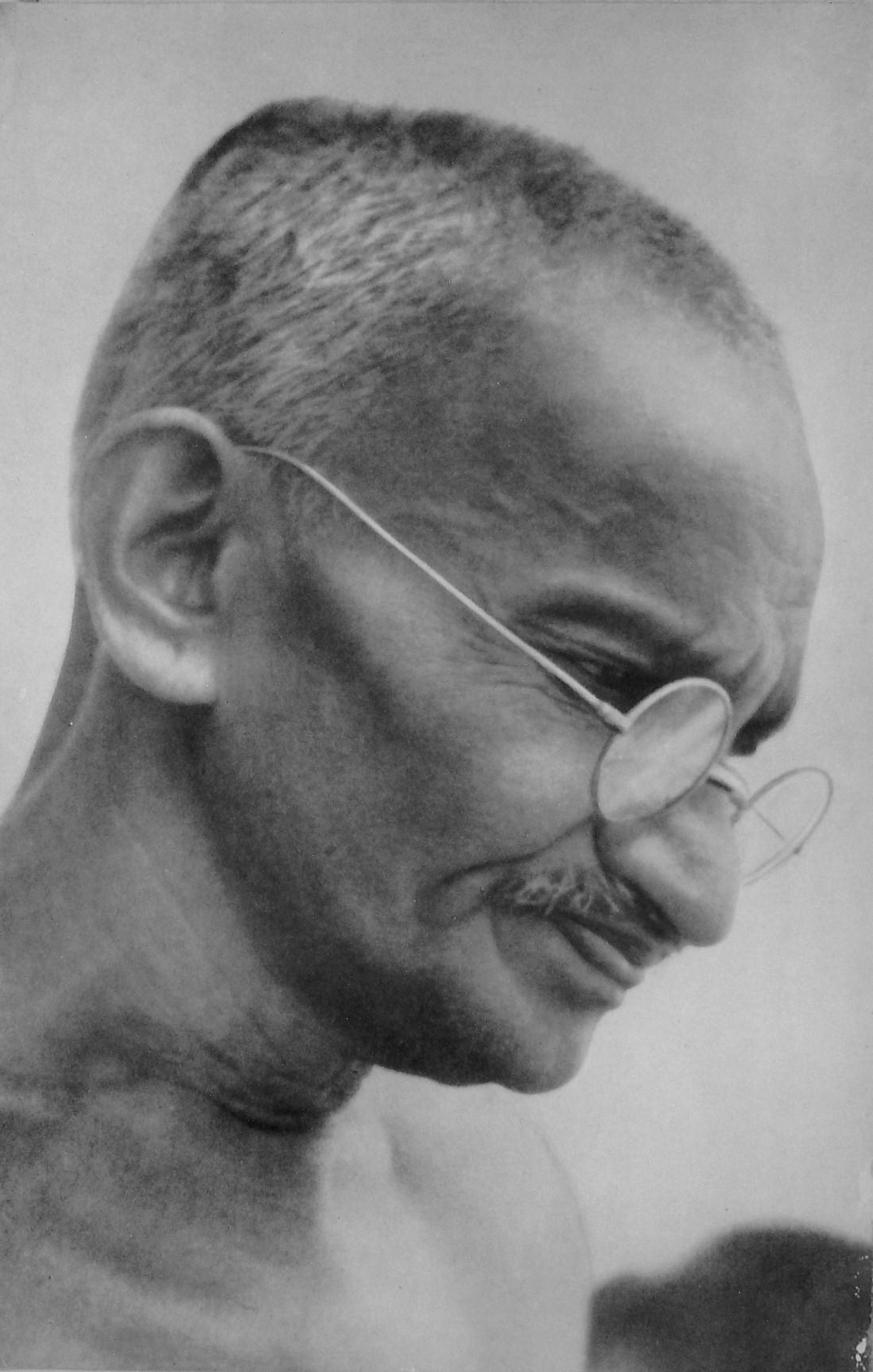

MAHATMA

LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

He is the One Luminous, Creator of All, Mahatma,
Always in the hearts of the people enshrined,
Revealed through Love, Intuition, and Thought,
Whoever knows Him, Immortal becomes.

TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDYALAYAM
T. KALLUPPATTY POST
MADURA DT

By

D. G. TENDULKAR

Illustrations collected and arranged by

VITHALBHAI K. JHAVERI

VOLUME THREE 1930-1934

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From The Publishers

THE FIRST volume depicted the early years of Gandhiji's life, his leadership in the South African struggle and his emergence in the field of Indian politics. The second volume opened with the new epoch, or what is called the Gandhian era, and it ended with the passing of the resolution on complete independence at the Lahore session of the Congress on the last day of 1929.

The third volume covers some of Gandhiji's subsequent political and social activities: the historic march to Dandi; pleading India's case at the Round Table Conference in London; campaign against untouchability; dynamic approach to swadeshi and his temporary retirement from the Congress. This volume brings down the story to October 1934.

The eight volumes depict the Gandhian era with its different phases leading to India's freedom.

In this arduous task of collecting material and undertaking the publication of eight-volume biography of Gandhiji, we have had co-operation from several friends and sympathizers, individual acknowledgements to whom are already made in the introduction to the first volume.

Gandhiji gave his graceful co-operation and thus made our work smoother. Jawaharlal Nehru has taken a keen interest in the publication and continues to give encouragement. He contributed a valuable foreword which has appeared in the first volume. He has helped us in securing some precious material like the Tolstoy-Gandhi correspondence. He has also given us kind permission to publish the correspondence exchanged between him and Gandhiji. R. R. Diwakar has helped us from the very beginning and he has made possible its publication in the present form. He is our friend and co-sharer of our difficulties. He has tried his best to lighten our burden.

Anu Bandyopadhyaya has given her ample co-operation in seeing the proofs, preparing the glossary and index.

Sumati Morarjee has lent us her unique collection of illustrations for embellishing the biography.

The workers of the Times of India Press have taken special pains and initiative in the printing of this book and we are indeed thankful to them for the same.

Although the greatest care is taken in the preparation of this biography, we should be thankful if readers point out any mistakes they may come across in these volumes. We would also be glad if they send us any documentary or pictorial material bearing on Gandhiji's life for reproduction in subsequent volumes.

D. G. Tendulkar
Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri

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Jacket and fly-leaf designed by Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri

MAHATMA

Independence Pledge

1930

INDIA'S CRY for independence has "already resounded in all parts of the world," said Jawaharlal Nehru in closing the session of the Lahore Congress. A week later Senator Blaine moved a resolution for recognition by the United States, of the Indian independence: "Whereas the people of India are today spontaneously moving towards the adoption of self-government under the constitutional form with popular approval, and seeking national independence, therefore, be it resolved that the Senate of the United States, mindful of the struggle for independence, that gave birth to our republic, participates with the people with deep interest that they feel for the success of the people of India in their struggle for liberty and independence."

Earl Russel, Under-secretary for India, speaking at Labour Party meeting, stated that none knew better than the Indians themselves how foolish it was to talk of complete independence. He said that dominion status was not possible at the moment and would not be for a long time. Great Britain had been guiding India along the road towards democracy and now to let her go suddenly, would be a calamity for India.

On January 2, 1930, the Working Committee of the Congress at its first meeting passed a resolution fixing Sunday, January 26, for a country-wide demonstration, supporting the creed of Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

Immediately after the Lahore Congress, and in obedience to its mandate, Motilal Nehru called upon all the Congress members of the Legislative Assembly and the provincial councils to resign their seats. A fortnight later a conference of the members of the Central Assembly and the Council of State was held in Delhi under the presidentship of Pandit Malaviya and it appealed to the members of the central and provincial legislatures not to resign. By the time

the Assembly met on January 20, it was known that the majority of the Congressmen had definitely decided to obey the Congress mandate. President Patel declared that he ceased to be a party man with his acceptance of the speakership and owed it to the house to continue to regard himself as a non-party man. But he was equally emphatic that "circumstanced as India is today, a situation might arise when in the larger interest of the country the President of the Assembly might feel called upon to tender his resignation with a view to return to a position of greater freedom." Pandit Malaviya and Patel resigned their seats, soon after.

On January 9 Gandhi wrote in *Young India*: "Granted a perfectly non-violent atmosphere and a fulfilled constructive programme, I would undertake to lead the mass civil disobedience campaign to a successful issue in the space of a few months." Addressing the students of Gujarat Vidyapith, he said that they should be ready to lay down their lives in defending the honour of the country:

"You will expect me to say something about the Independence Resolution passed at the Lahore Congress, especially the civil disobedience part of it, and you will want to know what is going to be your share in the struggle. Well, as I have often said, we rely not on numerical strength, but on the strength of character, and the civil disobedience resolution was moved more because I had faith in a few men sacrificing themselves for the cause than in the number of men coming forward in response to the call.

"Earl Russel has given us definitely to understand that India's dominion status is something different from what we have always believed it to be, namely, a status allied to that of Canada, New Zealand and Australia. These, the noble Earl admits, are virtually independent. I never had anything else in mind when I talked of dominion status for India. What Earl Russel says is tantamount to saying that instead of being in the iron chains that India has been in for years, she may now have the choice of changing them for golden ones. And some of us seem to hug the proposal. We are so very much fear-stricken that a severance of the British connection means to us violence and chaos. Well, I want to make myself clear once more. Votary as I am of non-violence, if I was given a choice between being a helpless witness to chaos and perpetual slavery, I should unhesitatingly say that I would far rather be witness to chaos in India, I would far rather be a witness to Hindus and Muslims

doing one another to death than that I should daily witness our gilded slavery. To my mind, golden shackles are far worse than the iron ones, for one easily feels the irksome and galling nature of the latter and is prone to forget the former. If, therefore, India must be in chains, I wish they were of iron rather than of gold or other precious metals.

"The spectre of an Afghan invasion is raised in certain quarters the moment we talk of independence. I do not mind the invasion when we have severed our slavish connection with Britain. But I am an incorrigible optimist; my faith in India winning her freedom by a bloodless revolution is unshakable. I think it is quite possible, if you will be true to your pledge. I would like to see the *snataks* of the *vidyapith* in the front in any struggle for swaraj. I want you to visualize what is coming. You have a harder ordeal than going to jail. Robbers, dacoits and murderers can go to jail, and they make themselves thoroughly at home there. But they do not serve the country by going to jail. A mere jail-going man does not help the country. What I want from you all is the preparedness to offer yourselves willing and pure sacrifices in the struggle. There is a lot of violence in the air, and you will have to immolate yourselves in the flames, if there are violent outbursts when and if I am put into jail. If you are true to your pledge of truth and non-violence, you will not hide yourselves in your houses whilst violence or incendiarism is going on, nor will you be active participators in it, but you will go and rush into the conflagration, with a view to extinguishing it. For surely that will be expected of you. Even the votaries of violence will expect that and nothing else from you. Vice pays a homage to virtue, and sometimes the way it chooses is to expect virtue, not to fall from its pedestal even whilst vice is rampant round about.

"You will be ready of course to march to jail, but I do not think you will be called upon to go to jail. The higher and severer ordeal I have just now pictured to you awaits you. I do not know what form civil disobedience is to take, but I am desperately in search of an effective formula.

"I am impatient to reach the goal if we can through non-violence and truth. Both spring from my unshakable faith in the supremacy of non-violence and truth. I know that however long the route may appear, it is in my opinion the shortest."

In another address before the National Educational Conference held at the *vidyapith* Gandhi said: "All those studying in national institutions and connected with them must do all the things that the country has to do, and must go through the same discipline, as the country has to go through for the attainment of swaraj, so that they may be ever ready to offer themselves willing sacrifices when the time comes . . . Literary training, scholarly research and linguistic pursuits, study of English and Sanskrit and the fine arts, had better take a back seat. All our national schools ought to be converted into factories of our national ammunition, namely, constructive work. There are millions of children in India today who have to go without any education, much less national education and the other big things I have mentioned. Why then can we not do without them until at any rate we have won our freedom? Think what the students in Europe did during the Great War. Are we prepared to make the sacrifices that they made? If deep down in us is the conviction that we may not even breathe in peace until we have our freedom, we will live and move and have our being in carrying out the constructive programme.

"I want you to shed the fear of death, so that when the history of freedom comes to be written, the names of the boys and girls of national schools and colleges may be mentioned therein as of those who died not doing violence but in resisting it, no matter by whom committed. The strength to kill is not essential for self-defence; one ought to have the strength to die. When a man is fully ready to die he will not even desire to offer violence. I may put it down as a self-evident proposition, that the desire to kill is in inverse proportion to the desire to die. History is replete with instances of men who by dying with courage and compassion on their lips converted the hearts of their violent opponents."

The month preceding the inauguration of the campaign had been full of trial and tribulation for the members of Sabarmati ashram, and day in and day out Gandhi poured out his whole soul on the small patch of ground exclusively used for prayers. He was put to a very severe test when the epidemic of smallpox carried away three children of the ashram. He had to go through heart-searching and examine every one of his actions and plans. There were protests from friends who implored him not to take the grave risk, and get the inmates vaccinated. "How can I go back on the principles

I have held so dear all my life, when I find that it is these very principles that are being put to the test?" he asked. "I have not the least doubt in my mind that vaccination is a filthy process, that it is harmful in the end and that it is little short of taking beef. I may be entirely mistaken. But holding the views that I do, how can I recant them? Because I see child after child passing away? No, not even if the whole of the ashram were to be swept away, may I insist on vaccination and pocket my principles. What would my love of truth and my adherence to the principles mean, if they were to vanish at the slightest test of reality? God is now putting me through a greater test. On the eve of what is to be the final test of our strength, God is warning me through the messenger of death. I have tried hydropathy and earth treatment with success in numerous cases. Never has the treatment failed, as it seems to have done during the month. But does that mean that I must lose faith in the treatment and my faith in God? Even so my faith in the efficacy of non-violence may be put to the severest test. I may have to see not three but hundreds and thousands being done to death during the campaign I am about to launch. Shall my heart quail before that catastrophe, or will I persevere in my faith? No, I want you every one to understand that this epidemic is not a scourge, but a trial and preparation, a tribulation sent to steel our hearts and to chain us more strongly and firmly to faith in God. And would not my faith in the Gita be a mockery, if three deaths were to unhinge me? It is as clear to me as daylight, that life and death are but phases of the same thing, the reverse and obverse of the same coin. In fact tribulation and death seem to me to present a phase far richer than happiness of life. What is life worth without trials and tribulations which are the salt of life. I want you all to treasure death and suffering more than life, and to appreciate their cleansing and purifying character."

All eyes now turned to Sabarmati, curious to know what Gandhi would do next. Tagore visited the ashram on January 18, to have a chat with Gandhi. "I am seventy now, Mahatmaji," Tagore said, "and so am considerably older than you." "But," replied Gandhi humorously, "when an old man of sixty cannot dance, a young poet of seventy can." Tagore seemed to envy Gandhi's ready-made prescription for a happy old age when he said, "You are getting ready for another arrest cure, and I wish they also gave me one."

"But," said Gandhi, "you do not behave yourself," and there was a peal of laughter.

Tagore talked on various topics and then apologized for having wasted much of Gandhi's time. This gave Gandhi an opportunity to harp on his favourite subject. "No," he said, "you have not wasted my time. I have been spinning away without allowing a break in the conversation. For every minute that I spin, there is in me the consciousness that I am adding to the nation's wealth. My calculation is that if one crore of us spin for an hour every day, and so turned an idle hour to account, we would add Rs. 50,000 every day to our national wealth. Our income is only seven pice per day, and even a single pice added to it is quite considerable. The spinning wheel is not meant to oust a single man or woman from his or her occupation. It seeks only to harness every single idle minute of our millions, for a common productive work. Unintelligent, resourceless and hopeless as they are, they have nothing better, more handy, and more paying to look to. They cannot think of adding to their agricultural produce. Our average holding is something less than two acres. The bulky recommendations of the Agricultural Commission contain nothing of value for the poor agriculturist, and what they have proposed will never take effect."

"Oh, these commissions are no use," affirmed Tagore. "They will end in adding a few more departments, that's all. I have no faith in them."

Tagore was keen on knowing what exactly Gandhi wanted to place before the country during the present year. "I am furiously thinking night and day," said Gandhi, "and I do not yet see any light coming out of the surrounding darkness. But even if we could not think of a programme of effective civil resistance, we could not possibly refrain from declaring the country's objective to mean complete independence especially when dominion status is said to mean what we have never understood it to mean."

As the poet prepared to go, the inmates of the ashram waylaid him to the prayer ground. "Talking," said Tagore, "is a wasteful effort and involves unnecessary exercise of the lungs. Rather than talk, as I usually have to do, I shall leave you one message in a single sentence. It is this that the sacrifice needed for serving our country must not consist in merely emotional enthusiasm which is indulged in as a sort of luxury, but it should be a discipline of

truth, and a severe discipline of truth. I know that you are going through it and will go through it, as long as you have your great teacher with you. Let us not talk, but have faith in silent work, faith in humble beginnings, and I know truth will take wing of itself and like fire will spread through the country, though its origin may be small and insignificant."

Idealists like Rev. B. de Ligt were puzzled over his insistence on national independence. "You, venerated Gandhi, have first of all concentrated your attention in too one-sided a manner upon India, instead of taking into consideration, in the first place, the whole of humanity. And it is this attitude which risks limiting your horizon and causing your tactics to swerve from their universal tendency." Gandhi, welcoming the criticism, observed: "A mere academic discussion can only hamper the present progress of non-violence. My collaboration with my countrymen today is confined to the breaking of our shackles. How we would feel and what we shall do after breaking them is more than they or I know."

The prospect of civil disobedience brought forth criticism from many Liberal friends. "The Congress cannot stay its hands after having passed the independence resolution," replied Gandhi. "It was no bluff, no showy nothing. It was deliberate definite change in the Congress mentality. It is then as much up to the critics as to me to devise the ways and means of achieving independence." He further added:

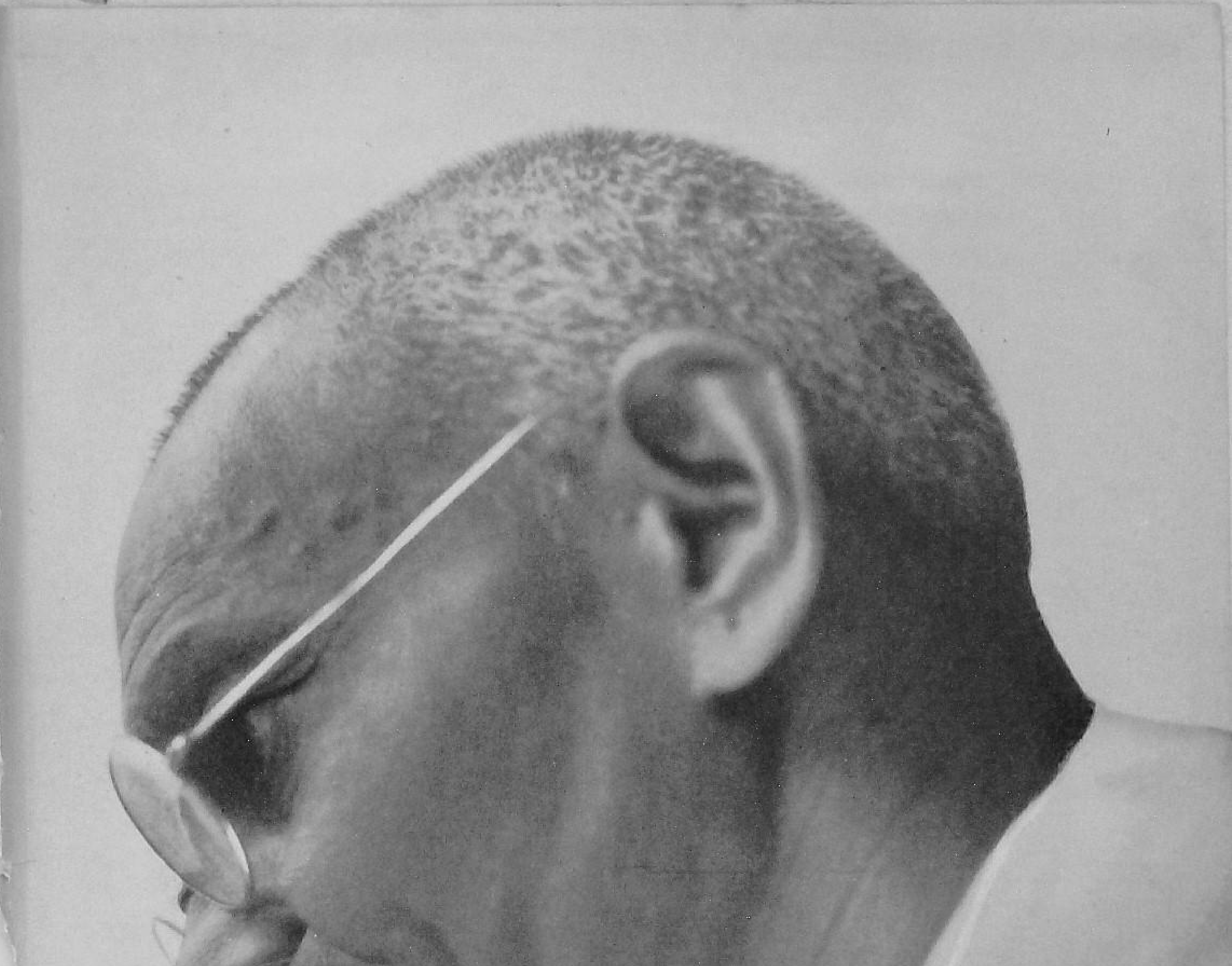
"There is undoubtedly a party of violence in the country. It is as patriotic as the best among us. What is more, it has much sacrifice to its credit. In daring, it is not to be surpassed by any of us. It is easy enough to fling unkind adjectives at its members, but it will not carry conviction with them. I am not referring to the frothy eloquence that passes muster for patriotism. I have in mind that secret, silent, persevering band of young men and women who want to see their country free at any cost. But whilst I admire and adore their patriotism, I have no faith in their method. I am convinced that their methods have cost the country much more than they know or care to admit. But they will listen to no argument, however reasonable it may be, unless they are convinced that there is a programme before the country which requires at least as much sacrifice as the tallest among them is prepared to make. They will not be allured by our speeches, resolutions or even conferences.

Action alone has an appeal for them. This appeal can only form non-violent action, which is no other than civil resistance. In my opinion it and it alone can save the country from impending lawlessness and secret crime. That even civil resistance may fail and may also hasten the lawlessness is no doubt a possibility. But if it fails in its purpose, it will not be civil resistance that will have failed. It will fail, if it does, for want of faith and consequent incapacity in the civil resisters.

"We must cease to dread violence, if we will have the country to be free. Can we not see that we are tightly pressed in the coil of violence? The peace we seem to prize is a mere makeshift, and it is bought with the blood of the starving millions. If critics could only realize the torture of their slow and lingering death brought about by forced starvation, they would risk anarchy and worse in order to end that agony. The agony will not end till the existing rule of spoliation has ended. It is a sin, with that knowledge, to sit supine, and for fear of imaginary anarchy or worse, to stop action that may prevent anarchy, and is bound, if successful, to end the heartless spoliation of a people who have deserved a better fate."

Explaining the significance of the movement to the Englishmen, Gandhi wrote:

"To the many known and still more unknown English friends, I owe a word on the eve of what may end in being a life and death struggle. In spite of myself I tried to believe in the possibility of self-respecting Congressmen attending the proposed Round Table Conference. I had my doubts, because I knew that the Congress, though it is admittedly the most representative organization in the country, it had no adequate power behind it for vindicating its position. It could, therefore, be represented at the conference only if it knew that the British Government and the people had, either through generous impulse or through the pressure of world opinion, decided to grant immediate dominion status, and that the conference was to meet in order to discuss not anything the different groups liked, but to discover the contents of a dominion status constitution. The Viceroy made it clear in no uncertain terms, that he could give no such assurance. Such being the case, consistently with its past declarations and with the national interest of which the Congress claims to be the principal trustee, it could not allow itself to be represented at the conference. But it may be asked,



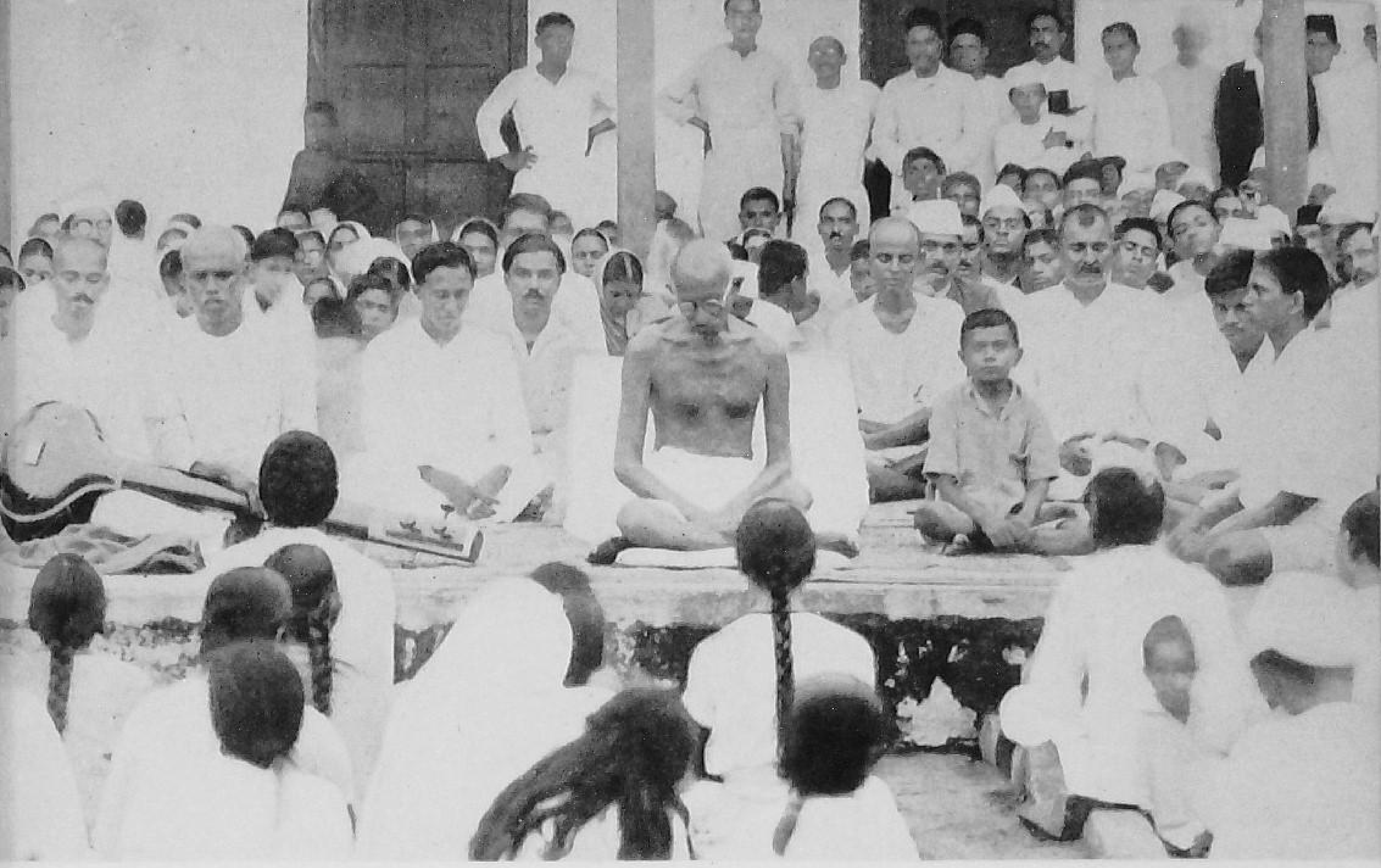
Photograph : Counsic Bros.

Gandhi, 1930

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi at the Sabarmati Ashram

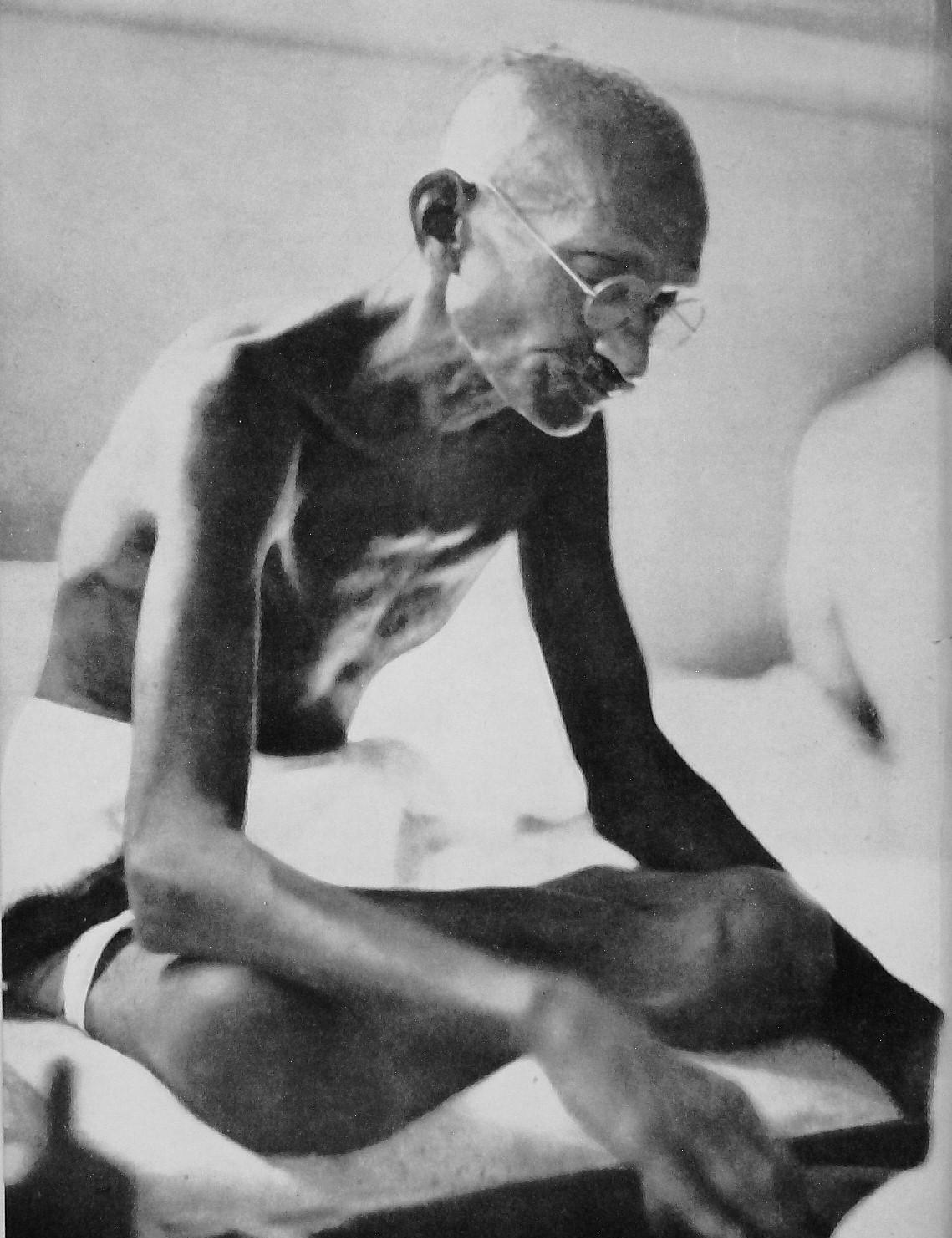
Taking a nap



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Evening ashram prayers

Gandhi, Chancellor of the Gujarat Vidyapith, presiding over the eighth convocation, January 11, 1930, at which Narendra Deva delivered his address as the chief guest



Courtesy : N. J. Nalawala

Gandhi busy with his charkha, 1930

granting that the Congress in the circumstances be expected to send its representatives, where was then the necessity for going from dominion status to independence? The answer is plain.

"Organizations, like men, if they are to command respect and grow, must have a sense of honour and must fulfil their promises. Well, the Congress promised at Calcutta to change the creed to independence if dominion status was not forthcoming by the 31st of December 1929. It did not come, nor was there any prospect of its coming for certain, in the immediate future. The Congress, therefore, had no other course left open, if it was not 'to commit suicide', but to declare its immediate objective to be Complete Independence instead of Dominion Status.

" 'But you are not fit for independence,' say some. Surely it is for us to judge whether we are fit or not. And granting that we are not, there is nothing wrong or immoral in our aspiring after independence and in the attempt rendering ourselves fitter day by day. We shall never be fit by being taught to feel helpless and to rely upon the British bayonet to keep us from fighting among ourselves or from being devoured by our neighbours. If we have to go through the agonies of a civil war or a foreign invasion, it won't be a new thing in the history of nations that have struggled for freedom. England has gone through both the experiences. After all, freedom is not a hot-house growth.

"It is open to those English friends who are sincerely anxious for India's welfare to assist India in her fight for freedom, and on her own terms. She knows best what she needs. Complete Independence does not mean arrogant isolation or a superior disdain for all help. But it does mean complete severance of the British bondage, be it ever so slight or well concealed . . . It must be clearly understood that the largest nationalist party in India will no longer submit to the position of a dependent nation, or to the process of helpless exploitation. It will run any risk to be free from the double curse. The nation wants to feel its power, more even than to have its independence. Possession of such power is independence.

"That the civil disobedience may resolve itself into violent disobedience is, I am sorry to have to confess, not an unlikely event. But I know that it will not be the cause of it. Violence is already corroding the whole body politic. Civil disobedience will be but a purifying process and may bring to the surface what is burrowing

under and into the whole body. With the evidence I have of the condition of the country and the unquenchable faith I have in the method of civil resistance, I must not be deterred from the course the inward voice seems to be leading me to.

"But whatever I do and whatever happens, English friends will accept my word, that whilst I am impatient to break the British bondage, I am no enemy of Britain."

To give a start to the campaign, and also to judge the temper of the country, January 26 was fixed as Independence Day, when a pledge of independence was to be taken all over the country. On the eve of the momentous day, Gandhi wrote:

"Remember that 26th is the day not to declare independence but to declare that we will be satisfied with nothing less than the Complete Independence as opposed to dominion status so called. Remember that on 26th we do not start civil disobedience, but only hold meetings to declare our firm determination to attain Purna Swaraj and to that end to carry out Congress instructions that may be issued from time to time. And remember that since we desire to attain our end by non-violent and truthful means, we can do so only through self-purification. We should devote the day to doing such constructive work as lies in our power to do. Remember that at the meetings there are to be no speeches. There is to be mere recitation and approval by show of hands of the declaration. The recitation should be in the provincial language."

The text of the declaration to be made on January 26 was:

"We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights, and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

"India has been ruined economically. The revenue derived from our people is out of all proportion to our income. Our average income is seven pice, less than two pence, per day, and of the heavy

taxes we pay, twenty per cent are raised from the land revenue derived from the peasantry and three per cent from the salt tax, which falls most heavily on the poor.

"Village industries, such as hand-spinning, have been destroyed, leaving the peasantry idle for at least four months in the year, and dulling their intellect for want of handicrafts, and nothing has been substituted, as in other countries, for the crafts thus destroyed.

"Customs and currency have been so manipulated as to heap further burdens on the peasantry. The British manufactured goods constitute the bulk of our imports. Customs duties betray clear partiality for the British manufactures, and revenue from them is used not to lessen the burden on the masses, but for sustaining a highly extravagant administration. Still more arbitrary has been the manipulation of the exchange ratio, which has resulted in millions being drained away from the country.

"Politically, India's status has never been so reduced as under the British regime. No reforms have given real political power to the people. The tallest of us have to bend before foreign authority. The rights of free expression of opinion and free association have been denied to us, and many of our countrymen are compelled to live in exile abroad and they cannot return to their own homes. All administrative talent is killed, and the masses have to be satisfied with petty village offices and clerkships.

"Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings, our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us.

"Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly, and the presence of an alien army of occupation, employed with deadly effect, to crush in us the spirit of resistance, has made us think that we cannot look after ourselves or put up a defence against foreign aggression, or even defend our homes and families from the attacks of thieves, robbers, and miscreants.

"We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country. We recognize, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will, therefore, prepare ourselves, by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help and stop payment of taxes without

doing violence, even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured. We, therefore, hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj."

Referring to the Congress resolution on independence and civil disobedience, the Viceroy announced in the Central Assembly on January 25: "It remains my firm desire as it is of His Majesty's Government to do everything that is possible for conciliation in order that Great Britain and India may collaborate together in finding a solution of the present difficulties. But it is no less incumbent upon me to make it plain that I shall discharge to the full, the responsibility resting upon myself and upon my Government for the effective maintenance of the authority of law." Referring to the goal of dominion status, he remarked: "The assertion of a goal is of necessity a different thing from the goal's attainment. And no sensible traveller could feel that a clear definition of his destination was the same thing as the completion of his journey." On the eve of Independence Day, the Ali brothers, Shafi Daudi and Ismail Khan issued a statement urging the Muslims not to participate in the demonstrations of the Congress.

Independence Day, January 26, came and it revealed as in a flash the earnest and enthusiastic mood of the country. There was something very impressive about the great gatherings everywhere, peacefully and solemnly taking the pledge of independence without any speeches or exhortation. Towns and villages vied with each other in celebrating the historic day. In the cities led by Calcutta and Bombay scores of thousands met and took the great resolve and in the country-side thousands of villagers assembled at numerous village meetings.

"The demonstrations of the 26th are an unmistakable proof that the Congress still remains the one body to rule the hearts of the masses," observed Gandhi. "Thank God, they have unity in their starvation." He became the vessel of their longings—"their hope that the glow of freedom when it comes will be felt in the remotest village." The mass enthusiasm gave the necessary impetus to him, and he felt with his sure touch on the pulse of the people that the time for action was ripe. "The party of non-violence must now use up all its resources; if it cannot act, it must own its incapacity and retire from the field of battle."

Gandhi, in welcoming Lord Irwin's announcement, said, "His Excellency deserves thanks from every Congressman for having cleared the atmosphere and let us know exactly where we stand." He said on January 31: "The Viceroy would not mind waiting for the grant of dominion status till every millionaire was reduced to the level of a wage-earner getting seven pice per day. The Congress will, if it had power, raise every starving peasant to the state in which he at least will get a living even equal to the millionaire's. And when the peasant is fully awakened to a sense of his plight and knows that it is not the kismet that brought him to the helpless state but the existing rule, unaided, he will in his impatience abolish all distinctions between the constitutional and the unconstitutional, even the violent and non-violent means. The Congress expects to guide the peasants in the right direction."

He was prepared to put off civil disobedience, if Britain would grant the substance, if not the outward form, of self-government. He demanded eleven things: total prohibition; restoration of the exchange rate to *1s. 4d.*; 50 per cent reduction of land revenue; abolition of the salt tax; reduction of military expenditure by at least 50 per cent to begin with; reduction of civil service salaries by half; a protective tariff against foreign cloth; enactment of a coastal Reservation Bill; discharge of all political prisoners, not condemned for murder or attempted murder; abolition or control of the C.I.D.; and issue of licenses for fire-arms for self-defence, subject to popular control. He pleaded: "Let the Viceroy satisfy us with regard to these very simple but vital needs of India. He will then hear no talk of civil disobedience."

"We refuse to be satisfied with the airy peace," Gandhi said. "We would rather risk the dark anarchy, if, perchance, thereby we can be released from the grinding pauperism. The threat of vengeance uttered against civil and criminal resisters is idle and uncalled for. There is this in common between both. Both have counted the cost. They are also out for suffering. Would that their means were also common. Unfortunately instead of being complementary, they neutralize each other. I know that the non-violent revolutionary like me impedes the progress of the violent revolutionary. I wish the latter would realize that he impedes my progress more than I do his, and that I, being a mahatma, if left unhampered by him, am likely to make greater progress than he can ever hope

to make. Let him realize too that he has never yet given me a fair chance. I want full suspension of his activity. If it will please him, I am free to admit that I dread him much more than I dread Lord Irwin's wrath."

The eleven points suggested by Gandhi for immediate attention raised a storm of indignation in the British press. Gandhi wrote in *Young India*: "It is not difficult to understand the resentment felt in England over the 'demands', nor the hysterics of Sir Malcolm Hailey over the idea of repudiating the debts in any circumstance whatsoever. Yet that is precisely what every ward, when he comes of age, has the right to do. If he finds the trustee having buttered his bread at the ward's expense, he makes the trustee pay for his malpractices, or misappropriation, or breach of trust, or whatever other name by which his selfishness may be described. There will thus be no atmosphere for a dispassionate examination of the case of the masses either in India or in England, till the Englishmen realize that they must part with some of the ill-gotten gains and cease in future to expect the inflow to England of millions that are annually drained from India under one pretext or another.

"It is clear that the riches derived from the tillers of the soil are not a voluntary contribution, or a contribution compelled for their benefit. Villages are not affected by Pax Britannica so called, for they were untouched, even by the invasions of Timur or Nadirshah. They will remain untouched by anarchy, if it comes. But in order that this enormous contribution may be exacted without resistance, violence has been organized by the British Government on a scale unknown before, and manipulated in so insidious a manner as not to be easily seen or felt, as such. British rule has appeared to me to be a perfect personification of violence. There are snakes that by their very appearance paralyse their victims. They do not need to make further demonstration of their power. Even so, I am sorry to say, has the British power worked upon us in India.

"Let us, too, understand how organized violence works and is on that account far more harmful than sporadic, thoughtless, sudden outburst. Ordered violence hides itself often behind camouflage and hypocrisy as we see them working through the declarations of good intentions, commissions, conferences and the like, or even through measures conceived as tending to the public benefit but in reality to the benefit of the wrongdoer. Greed and deceit are very often the

offspring, as they are equally often the parents of violence. Naked violence repels like the naked skeleton, shorn of flesh, blood and the velvety skin. It cannot last long. But it persists fairly long when it wears the mask of peace and progress so called.

"Such awe-inspiring violence concealed under golden lid begets the violence of the weak which in its turn works secretly and sometimes openly. Non-violence has to work in the midst of this double violence. But if it is the supreme law governing mankind, it must be able to make its way in the face of the heaviest odds.

"The greatest obstacle in the path of non-violence is the presence in our midst of the indigenous interests that have sprung up from British rule, the interests of monied men, speculators, scrip-holders, landholders, factory-owners, and the like. All these do not always realize that they are living on the blood of the masses, and when they do, they become as callous as the British principals, whose tools and agents they are.

"But non-violence has to be patient with these as with the British principals. The aim of the non-violence worker must ever be to convert. He may not, however, wait endlessly. When, therefore, the limit is reached, he takes risks and conceives plans of active satyagraha, which may mean civil disobedience and the like."

The critics in India said that Gandhi was inconsistent. In one breath he insisted on independence and in another he said that his minimum demand was not even dominion status, but just eleven points. "If you are not able to evolve a programme that will be consistent, it is time that you discarded the function of leading the masses and the country to swaraj." Gandhi replied:

"I must admit my many inconsistencies. But since I am called 'mahatma', I might well endorse Emerson's saying that 'foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.' There is a method in my inconsistencies. There is a consistency running through my seeming inconsistencies, as in nature, there is a unity running through seeming diversity. Independence means at least those eleven points, if it means anything at all to the masses. Mere withdrawal of the English is not independence. By mentioning the eleven points I have given a body in part to the illusive word independence.

"As for my leadership, if I have it, it has not come for any seeking. It is a fruit of faithful service. A man can as little discard such leadership, as he can the colour of his skin. And since I have

become an integral part of the nation, it has to keep me with all my faults and shortcomings. But, of this, I am certain, that if they and those who would never criticize me will have the patience to understand my programme and have the steadfastness to follow it, Purna Swaraj is near."

In February the Congress Working Committee met at Sabarmati. Civil disobedience, it resolved, should be initiated and controlled by those who believe in non-violence for the purpose of achieving Purna Swaraj, as an article of faith. "Civil disobedience is sometimes a peremptory demand on love," said Gandhi. "Dangerous it undoubtedly is, but no more than the encircling violence. Civil disobedience is the only non-violent escape from its soul-destroying heat. The danger lies only in one direction, in the sudden outbreak of violence, side by side with civil disobedience. If it does, I know now the way—not the retracing as at the time of Bardoli. The struggle, in freedom's battle, of non-violence against violence, no matter from what quarter the latter comes, must continue, till a single representative is left alive. More no man can do, and to do less would be tantamount to want of faith." If the party of non-violence cannot act, it must own its incapacity and retire from the field of battle, he said.

The great question that hung in the air now was: How? What shape the civil disobedience is going to take this time? And then Gandhi gave the hint. Salt suddenly became a pregnant word and the Salt Tax became a subject of discussion in *Young India*. "There is no article like salt, outside water, by taxing which the state can reach even the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and utterly helpless. The tax constitutes, therefore, the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise." Gandhi was contemplating some method of attacking this nefarious monopoly.

On February 27, he wrote in *Young India*: "It must be taken for granted, that when civil disobedience is started, my arrest is a certainty. It is, therefore, necessary to consider what should be done when the event takes place.

"On the eve of my arrest in 1922, I had warned the co-workers against any demonstration of any kind save that of mute, complete non-violence, and had insisted that constructive work which alone could organize the country for civil disobedience should be prosecuted with the utmost zeal. This time, after my arrest, there is to

be no mute, passive non-violence, but non-violence of the activest type should be set in motion, so that not a single believer in non-violence as an article of faith, for the purpose of achieving India's goal, should find himself free or alive, at the end of the effort, to submit any longer to the existing slavery. It would be, therefore, the duty of every one to take up such civil disobedience, or civil resistance, as may be advised and conducted by my successor, or as might be taken up by the Congress.

"So far as I am concerned, my intention is to start the movement only through the inmates of the ashram and those who have submitted to its discipline and assimilated the spirit of its methods. When the beginning is well and truly made, I expect the response from all over the country. It will be the duty then of every one who wants to make the movement a success to keep it non-violent and under discipline. Every one will be expected to stand at his post except when called by his chief. If there is a spontaneous mass response, as I hope there will be, if previous experience is any guide, it will largely be self-regulated. But every one who accepts non-violence, whether as an article of faith or policy, would assist the mass movement. Mass movements have, all over the world, thrown up unexpected leaders. And this should be no exception to the rule. Whilst, therefore, every effort imaginable and possible should be made to restrain the forces of violence, civil disobedience once begun this time cannot be stopped and must not be stopped, so long as there is a single civil resister left free or alive."

In the same issue of *Young India* he published his code of discipline for the Congress volunteers. The satyagrahi must harbour no anger, must suffer the anger of his opponent, putting up with assaults but refusing to retaliate; but he must not submit, out of fear of punishment, or the like, to any order given in anger. He must refrain from insults and swearing, he must protect opponents from insult or attack, even at the risk of his life. He must neither resist his arrest nor the attachment of his property, but if he has got any property in his possession as a trustee, he must refuse to surrender it, even though in defending it, he might lose his life. As a prisoner he must behave in an exemplary manner, as a member of his unit in the struggle, he must obey the orders of his leaders, although he may resign in the event of serious disagreement. He may not expect guarantees for maintenance of his dependants.

The moment for launching civil disobedience could not be postponed any longer. On March 2, Gandhi addressed a historic letter to the Viceroy, "Dear Friend":

"Before embarking on civil disobedience, and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out.

"My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst, therefore, I hold the British rule to be a curse, I do not intend any harm to a single Englishman, or to any legitimate interest, he may have in India.

"I must not be misunderstood. Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not, therefore, consider Englishmen in general, to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends. Indeed much that I have learnt of the evil of the British rule is due to the writings of frank and courageous Englishmen, who have not hesitated to tell the unpalatable truth about that rule.

"And why do I regard the British rule as a curse?

"It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation, and by a ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford.

"It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And, by the policy of cruel disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually. Lacking the inward strength, we have been reduced, by all but universal disarmament, to a state bordering on cowardly helplessness.

"In common with many of my countrymen, I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution. But when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British Cabinet would pledge yourselves to support a scheme of full dominion status, the Round Table Conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and the dumb millions are unconsciously, thirsting. Needless to say, there never was any question of Parliament's verdict being anticipated. Instances are not wanting of the British Cabinet, in anticipation of the parliamentary verdict, having itself pledged to a particular policy.

"The Delhi interview having miscarried, there was no option for Pandit Motilal Nehru and me, but to take steps, to carry out the solemn resolution of the Congress arrived at in Calcutta at its session in 1928.

"But the resolution of independence should cause no alarm, if the word dominion status mentioned in your announcement had been used in its accepted sense. For, has it not been admitted by the responsible British statesmen, that dominion status is virtual independence? What, however, I fear is that there never has been any intention of granting such dominion status to India, in the immediate future.

"But this is past history. Since the announcement many events have happened which show unmistakably the trend of British policy.

"It seems as clear as daylight that responsible British statesmen do not contemplate any alteration in British policy, that might adversely affect Britain's commerce with India, or require a close and impartial scrutiny of Britain's transactions with India. If nothing is done to end the process of exploitation, India must be bled with an ever increasing speed. The Finance Member regards as a settled fact the 1/6 ratio which by a stroke of the pen drains India of a few crores. And when a serious attempt is being made through a civil form of direct action, to unsettle this fact, among many others, even you cannot help appealing to the wealthy landed classes, to help you to crush that attempt, in the name of an order that grinds India to atoms.

"Unless those who work in the name of the nation understand and keep before all concerned, the motive that lies behind this craving for independence, there is every danger of independence itself coming to us so charged as to be of no value to those toiling voiceless millions, for whom it is sought, and for whom it is worth taking. It is for that reason, that I have been recently telling the public what independence should really mean.

"Let me put before you some of the salient points.

"The terrific pressure of land revenue, which furnishes a large part of the total, must undergo a considerable modification, in an independent India. Even the much vaunted permanent settlement benefits few rich zamindars, not the ryots. The ryot has remained as helpless as ever. He is a mere tenant at will. Not only, then, has land revenue to be considerably reduced, but the whole revenue

system has to be so revised, as to make the ryot's good its primary concern. But the British system seems to be designed to crush the very life out of him. Even the salt he must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him, if only because of the heartless impartiality of its incidence. The tax shows itself more burdensome on the poor man, when it is remembered that salt is the one thing he must eat more than the rich, both individually and collectively. The drink and drug revenue, too, is derived from the poor. It saps the foundations both of their health and morals. It is defended under the false plea of individual freedom, but, in reality, is maintained for its own sake. The ingenuity of the authors of the reforms of 1919 transferred this revenue to the so-called responsible part of dyarchy, so as to throw the burden of prohibition on it, thus, from the very beginning, rendering it powerless for good. If the unhappy minister wipes out this revenue he must starve education, since in the existing circumstances he has no new source of replacing that revenue. If the weight of taxation has crushed the poor from above, the destruction of the central supplementary industry, that is, hand-spinning, has undermined their capacity for producing wealth. The tale of India's ruination is not complete without reference to the liabilities incurred in her name. Sufficient has been recently said about these in the public press. It must be the duty of a free India to subject all the liabilities to the strictest investigation, and repudiate those that may be adjudged by an impartial tribunal to be unjust and unfair.

"The iniquities sampled above are maintained in order to carry on a foreign administration, demonstrably the most expensive in the world. Take your own salary. It is over Rs. 21,000 per month besides many other indirect additions. The British Prime Minister gets £5,000 per year, that is, Rs. 5,400 per month, at the present rate of exchange. You are getting over Rs. 700 per day, against India's average income of less than two annas per day. The Prime Minister gets Rs. 180 per day, against Great Britain's average income of nearly Rs. 2 per day. Thus you are getting much over five thousand times India's average income. The British Prime Minister is getting only ninety times Britain's average income. On bended knee I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon. I have taken a personal illustration to drive home a painful truth. I have too great a regard for you as a man to wish to hurt your feelings. I know

that you do not need the salary you get. But a system that provides for such an arrangement deserves to be summarily scrapped. What is true of the Viceregal salary is true generally of the whole administration.

"A radical cutting down of the revenue, therefore, depends upon an equally radical reduction in the expenses of the administration. This means a transformation of the scheme of government. This transformation is impossible without independence. And hence the spontaneous demonstration of 26th January, in which hundreds of thousands of villagers instinctively participated. To them independence means deliverance from the killing weight.

"Not one of the great British political parties, it seems to me, is prepared to give up the Indian spoils to which Great Britain helps herself from day to day, often, in spite of the unanimous opposition of Indian opinion.

"Nevertheless, if India is to live as a nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy must be found for immediate relief. The proposed conference is certainly not the remedy. It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces. Conviction or no conviction, Great Britain would defend her Indian commerce and interests by all the forces at her command. India must consequently evolve force enough to free herself from that embrace of death.

"It is common cause that, however disorganized, and, for the time being, insignificant, it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt. Its end is the same as mine. But I am convinced that it cannot bring the desired relief to the dumb millions. The conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organized violence of the British Government. Many think that non-violence is not an active force. My experience, limited though it surely is, shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force. It is my purpose to set in motion that force as well against the organized violent force of the British rule, as the unorganized violent force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give rein to both the forces above-mentioned. Having an unquestioning and immovable faith in the efficacy of non-violence, as I know it, it would be sinful on my part to wait any longer.

"This non-violence will be expressed through civil disobedience, for the moment confined to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram, but ultimately designed to cover all those who choose to join the movement with its obvious limitations.

"I know that in embarking on non-violence, I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk. But the victories of truth have never been won without risks, often of the gravest character. Conversion of a nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another, far more numerous, far more ancient, and no less cultured than itself, is worth any amount of risk.

"I have deliberately used the word conversion. For my ambition is no less than to convert the British people through non-violence, and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India. I do not seek to harm your people. I want to serve them even as I want to serve my own. I believe that I have always served them. I served them up to 1919, blindly. But when my eyes were opened and I conceived non-co-operation, the object still was to serve them. I employed the same weapon that I have, in all humility, successfully used against the dearest members of my family. If I have equal love for your people with mine, it will not long remain hidden. It will be acknowledged by them, even as the members of my family acknowledged it, after they had tried me for several years. If the people join me, as I expect they will, the sufferings they will undergo, unless the British nation sooner retraces its steps, will be enough to melt the stoniest hearts.

"The plan through civil disobedience will be to combat such evils as I have sampled out. If we want to sever the British connection it is because of such evils. When they are removed, the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation will be open. If the British commerce with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty in recognizing our independence. I invite you then to pave the way for immediate removal of those evils, and thus open a way for a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship and in arranging terms of mutual help and commerce equally suited to both. You have unnecessarily laid stress upon communal problem that unhappily affect this land. Important though they undoubtedly are for the consideration of any scheme of Government they have little bearing on the greater problems which are above

communities and which affect them all equally. But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the eleventh day of this month, I shall proceed with such co-workers of the ashram as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the salt laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's standpoint. As the independence movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is that we have submitted to the cruel monopoly for so long. It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope that there will be tens of thousands ready, in a disciplined manner, to take up the work after me, and, in the act of disobeying the Salt Act, to lay themselves open to the penalties of a law that should never have disfigured the statute book.

"I have no desire to cause you unnecessary embarrassment, or any at all, so far as I can help. If you think that there is any substance in my letter, and if you will care to discuss matters with me, and if to that end you would like me to postpone publication of this letter, I shall gladly refrain on receipt of a telegram to that effect soon after this reaches you. You will, however, do me the favour not to deflect me from my course, unless you can see your way to conform to the substance of this letter.

"This letter is not in any way intended as a threat, but is a simple and sacred duty, peremptory on a civil resister. Therefore, I am having it specially delivered by a young English friend who believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in non-violence and whom Providence seems to have sent to me, as it were, for the very purpose."

Gandhi selected Reginald Reynolds as his messenger, because he wanted "to forge a further check" upon himself, against any intentional act that would hurt a single Englishman.

The Viceroy's prompt reply was simply an expression of regret that Gandhi should be "contemplating a course of action which is clearly bound to involve violation of the law, and danger to the public peace."

"On bended knees I asked for bread and I have received stone instead," Gandhi exclaimed. On March 12 he wrote:

"It was open to the Viceroy to disarm me by freeing the poor man's salt, tax on which costs him five annas per year or nearly

three days' income. I do not know outside India any one who pays to the state Rs. 3 per year, if he earns Rs. 360 during that period. It was open to the Viceroy to do many other things except sending the usual reply. But the time is not yet. He represents a nation that does not easily give in, that does not easily repent. Entreaty never convinces it. It readily listens to physical force. It can witness with bated breath a boxing match for hours without fatigue. It can go mad over a football match, in which there may be broken bones. It goes into ecstacies over blood-curdling accounts of war. It will listen also to mute, resistless suffering. It will not part with the millions it annually drains from India in reply to any argument, however convincing. The Viceregal reply does not surprise me.

"But I know that the salt tax has to go and many other things with it, if my letter means what it says. Time alone can show how much of it was meant.

"The reply says I contemplate a course of action which is clearly bound to involve violation of the law, and danger to the public peace. In spite of the forest of books containing rules and regulations, the only law that the nation knows is the will of the British administrators, and the only public peace the nation knows is the peace of a public prison. India is one vast prison-house. I repudiate this law, and regard it as my sacred duty to break the mournful monotony of the compulsory peace, that is choking the heart of the nation for want of free vent."

Dandi March

1930

Gandhi proposed to launch the campaign with the small ashram community. Hitherto they had all been kept in reserve in order that by a long course of discipline they might be able to give a good account of themselves and of satyagraha. "If," said Gandhi, "at the end of fifteen years of its existence, the ashram cannot give such a demonstration, it and I should disappear, and it would be well for the nation, ashram and me." To the Working Committee colleagues he said: "Wait till I begin. Once I march to the place, the idea will be released." The destination was Dandi, formerly a lighthouse, but now a deserted village on the seacoast, about two hundred miles from the ashram.

There was difficulty in selecting the first batch of satyagrahis. Workers from far and near were anxious to enlist themselves. The Frontier Province had offered to send volunteers. Women were eager to be included in the first batch. There were several applications from men and women not belonging to the ashram keen on marching with Gandhi. He took down the women's names but he soon changed his mind. Their time was not just yet, and he gave a reason: "I must be considerate to the opponent. We want to go in for suffering, and there may even be torture. If we put the women in front, the Government may hesitate to inflict on us all the penalty that they might otherwise inflict. A delicate sense of chivalry is what decides me against including the women in the first batch." As for the rest, he wanted that the selection should be made only from those who had gone through the rigid discipline of the ashram, and who tried to follow truth and non-violence in thought, word and deed, and also to follow other ashram rules. Mirabehn and Reginald Reynolds wanted to be in the first batch. "Not you," Gandhi said to them. "For you there is a greater and far more sacred task. Born as you were in England, I expect from

you a greater penance, and that is to forego the desire to invite suffering, to remain behind, and to help in conducting as many of the activities of the ashram as possible."

The first batch of the satyagrahis numbering seventy-nine hailed from the Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, U.P., Cutch, Sind, Kerala, Rajputana, Andhra, Karnatak, Bombay, Tamil Nad, Bihar, Bengal, Utkal, Nepal and Fiji. Among them there were two Muslims, one Christian and the rest were Hindus, two representing the untouchables. They were all active members of the Sabarmati ashram. The ages of the satyagrahis varied from sixteen to sixty-one, the eldest being Gandhi.

Except for the children and women and a few grown-up workers, Sabarmati ashram was preparing itself to march at the appointed hour. The Gujarat Vidyapith had suspended its literary activities save for boys under sixteen who were already under training. The teachers and students had offered their services as volunteers for the forthcoming struggle. A class for a fortnight's emergency training had been opened. Twenty students and teachers were selected to precede the first batch of satyagrahis, to make necessary preparations in advance and assist the villagers. They were ordered not to offer satyagraha till Gandhi's men were arrested and to replace them when they were removed. "I am sure that every national institution will copy the example of Gujarat Vidyapith," wrote Gandhi. "And I hope that the government and the aided institutions will also copy the example. Every revolution of modern times had found students in the forefront. The call of 1920 was for emptying government institutions and bringing into being national ones. Today the call is for engaging in the final conflict, for mass civil disobedience. It will not come, if those who have been hitherto the loudest in their cry for liberty have no action in them. If the salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? This I know, that if civil disobedience is not developed to the fullest possible extent now, it may not be for another generation. Let them take the final plunge."

On March 6, 1930 Sardar Patel set out for Borsad to prepare the people for the fitting reception of Gandhi and his batch when they would pass through the district. "Now the die is cast, and there is no turning back," he said. "You have to vindicate Gandhiji's choice of your taluk as the scene of his first experiment in mass

civil disobedience." The Government gave Sardar Patel no time and arrested him on March 7, in Ras, before he could address the meeting of the eager villagers.

"Gujarat, nay India, is preparing to vindicate the authority of the supreme law which will supersede the utter lawlessness masquerading under the name of law," said Gandhi. On March 9, 75,000 people met on the sands of Sabarmati to pass a resolution in the form of an oath in Gandhi's presence: "We, the citizens of Ahmedabad, determine hereby that we shall go the same path where Vallabhbhai has gone, and we shall take full independence attempting to do so. Without achieving freedom for our country we shall not rest in peace nor will the Government get peace. We solemnly believe that India's emancipation lies in truth and peace." There was an echo of the resolve resounding all over India.

The crowds began to besiege the ashram ground. "The march begins on Wednesday morning," Gandhi announced on March 10. "Now I should like to analyse the thing for you and to implore you to appreciate its real implications. Though the battle is to begin in a couple of days, how is it that you can come here quite fearlessly? I do not think any one of you would be here, if you had to face rifle-shots or bombs. But you have no fear of rifle-shots or bombs. Why? Supposing I had announced I was going to launch a violent campaign—not necessarily with men armed with rifles, but even with sticks or stones—do you think the Government would have left me free until now? Can you show me one example in history, be it in England, America or Russia, where the state has tolerated violent defiance of authority for a single day? But here you know that the Government is puzzled and perplexed. And you have come here because you have been familiarized by now with the idea of seeking voluntary imprisonment."

"Then I would ask you to proceed, a step further," he added. Supposing ten men in each of the 700,000 villages in India come forward to manufacture salt and to disobey the Salt Act, what do you think can this Government do? Even the worst autocrat you can imagine would not dare to blow the regiments of peaceful civil resisters out of a cannon's mouth. If you will but bestir yourselves just a little, I assure you we should be able to tire this Government out in a very short time. I want you, therefore, to understand the meaning of this struggle and to do your part in it. If it is only

curiosity that moves you to walk this long distance, you had better not waste your time and mine. If you come here to bless us and our movement, the blessings must take some concrete shape. I do not want any money from you. I am hoping that it may be possible to fight this battle with the least possible money. So I don't want you to contribute any money just now. That you will do unasked when our suffering has reached that stage which cannot but compel your sympathy. But I want you to take your courage in both hands and contribute in men towards the campaign which promises to be fierce and prolonged."

Day after day he explained his programme, answered questions, and gave his message at the prayer meetings. There was no limit to the number of visitors to the ashram and press reporters broke the sanctity of prayer grounds. There was a cryptic letter from a Revolutionary Party to "Comrade Gandhi", giving him only three years' time to try his non-violence. A German doctor sent a drawing executed by himself along with a note that in far-off Germany, "a humble fellow pilgrim is praying for him and his work every morning and evening." "God guard you," said a New York message from Rev. John Haynes Holmes. Persistent rumours were afloat of Gandhi's impending arrest and deportation. On 11th March, the crowd swelled to 10,000, when the evening prayers were held. At the end, Gandhi delivered a memorable speech on the eve of his historic march:

"In all probability this will be my last speech to you. Even if the Government allow me to march tomorrow morning, this will be my last speech on the sacred banks of the Sabarmati. Possibly these may be the last words of my life here.

"I have already told you yesterday what I had to say. Today I shall confine myself to what you should do after my companions and I are arrested. The programme of the march to Jalalpur must be fulfilled as originally settled. The enlistment of the volunteers for this purpose should be confined to Gujarat only. From what I have seen and heard during the last fortnight, I am inclined to believe that the stream of civil resisters will flow unbroken.

"But let there be not a semblance of breach of peace even after all of us have been arrested. We have resolved to utilize all our resources in the pursuit of an exclusively non-violent struggle. Let no one commit a wrong in anger. This is my hope and prayer. I wish

these words of mine reached every nook and corner of the land. My task shall be done if I perish and so do my comrades. It will then be for the Working Committee of the Congress to show you the way and it will be up to you to follow its lead. So long as I have not reached Jalalpur, let nothing be done in contravention to the authority vested in me by the Congress. But once I am arrested, the whole responsibility shifts to the Congress. No one who believes in non-violence, as a creed, need, therefore, sit still. My compact with the Congress ends as soon as I am arrested. In that case there should be no slackness in the enrolment of volunteers. Wherever possible, civil disobedience of salt laws should be started. These laws can be violated in three ways. It is an offence to manufacture salt wherever there are facilities for doing so. The possession and sale of contraband salt, which includes natural salt or salt earth, is also an offence. The purchasers of such salt will be equally guilty. To carry away the natural salt deposits on the seashore is likewise violation of law. So is the hawking of such salt. In short, you may choose any one or all of these devices to break the salt monopoly.

"We are, however, not to be content with this alone. There is no ban by the Congress and wherever the local workers have self-confidence other suitable measures may be adopted. I stress only one condition, namely, let our pledge of truth and non-violence as the only means for the attainment of swaraj be faithfully kept. For the rest, every one has a free hand. But, that does not give a licence to all and sundry to carry on on their own responsibility. Wherever there are local leaders, their orders should be obeyed by the people. Where there are no leaders and only a handful of men have faith in the programme, they may do what they can, if they have enough self-confidence. They have a right, nay it is their duty, to do so. The history of the world is full of instances of men who rose to leadership, by sheer force of self-confidence, bravery and tenacity. We too, if we sincerely aspire to swaraj and are impatient to attain it, should have similar self-confidence. Our ranks will swell and our hearts strengthen, as the number of our arrests by the Government increases.

"Much can be done in many other ways besides these. Liquor and foreign cloth shops can be picketed. We can refuse to pay taxes if we have the requisite strength. The lawyers can give up practice. The public can boycott the law courts by refraining from litigation.

Government servants can resign their posts. In the midst of the despair reigning all round people quake with fear of losing employment. Such men are unfit for swaraj. But why this despair? The number of Government servants in the country does not exceed a few hundred thousand. What about the rest? Where are they to go? Even free India will not be able to accommodate a greater number of public servants. A collector then will not need the number of servants, he has got today. He will be his own servant. Our starving millions can by no means afford this enormous expenditure. If, therefore, we are sensible enough, let us bid good-bye to Government employment, no matter if it is the post of a judge or a peon. Let all who are co-operating with the Government in one way or another, be it by paying taxes, keeping titles, or sending children to official schools, etc., withdraw their co-operation in all or as many ways as possible. Then there are women who can stand shoulder to shoulder with men in this struggle.

"You may take it as my will. It was the message that I desired to impart to you before starting on the march or for the jail. I wish there to be no suspension or abandonment of the war that commences tomorrow morning or earlier, if I am arrested before that time. I shall eagerly await the news that ten batches are ready as soon as my batch is arrested. I believe there are men in India to complete the work begun by me. I have faith in the righteousness of our cause and the purity of our weapons. And where the means are clean, there God is undoubtedly present with His blessings. And where these three combine, there defeat is an impossibility. A satyagrahi, whether free or incarcerated, is ever victorious. He is vanquished only, when he forsakes truth and non-violence and turns a deaf ear to the inner voice. If, therefore, there is such a thing as defeat for even a satyagrahi, he alone is the cause of it. God bless you all and keep off all obstacles from the path in the struggle that begins tomorrow."

On March 12 at 6.30 a.m. with the whole world watching on, Gandhi started with seventy-eight followers on the historic march of Dandi. A huge crowd followed. For miles, roads were watered and bestrewn with green leaves and, flags and festoons gave an appearance of festival. Gandhi, at the head of the procession, set a fast pace, with his staff in hand. "Like the historic march of Ramachandra to Lanka the march of Gandhi will be memorable,"

said Motilal Nehru. "Like the exodus of Israelites under Moses," remarked P. C. Ray.

"Today the pilgrim marches onward on his long trek," observed Jawaharlal Nehru. "Staff in hand he goes along the dusty roads of Gujarat, clear-eyed and firm of step, with his faithful band trudging along behind him. Many a journey he has undertaken in the past, many a weary road traversed. But longer than any that have gone before is this last journey of his, and many are the obstacles in his way. But the fire of a great resolve is in him and surpassing love of his miserable countrymen. And love of truth that scorches and love of freedom that inspires. And none that passes him can escape the spell, and men of common clay feel the spark of life. It is a long journey, for the goal is the independence of India and the ending of the exploitation of her millions."

The first day's ten-mile march through the heat and dust ended at Aslali. About a hundred villagers welcomed Gandhi and his followers with flags and flowers and drums and blowpipe music. "The soldiers of the first batch had burnt their boats the moment the march began," said Gandhi to the assembled. He added that he would not return to the ashram until the Salt Act was repealed, until swaraj was won.

Gandhi's energy at the age of sixty-one was amazing. Every day he walked ten miles or more and addressed meetings. The ashram routine of prayer, spinning and writing up the daily diary was incumbent on every marcher. "Ours is a sacred pilgrimage," he said, "and we should be able to account for every minute of our time." He retired at nine still talking to people and giving interviews until he fell asleep. Long before his comrades were up he awoke and began correspondence. At four in the morning he was seen writing letters by the moonlight as the little lamp had gone out for want of oil and he would not wake up anybody. At six, there was the call to morning prayers. After the prayer he delivered a sermon to the pilgrims on the march, and answered questions. The march commenced every day at 6.30 a.m.

Gandhi, leading his followers, halted at Bareja and Navagam on March 13, at Vasna on the 14th, at Matar and Nadiad on the 15th. The marchers had a very fatiguing journey. The enthusiasm of the crowds was so great that even four days after the commencement of the march, Mahadev Desai had difficulty in seeing Gandhi at

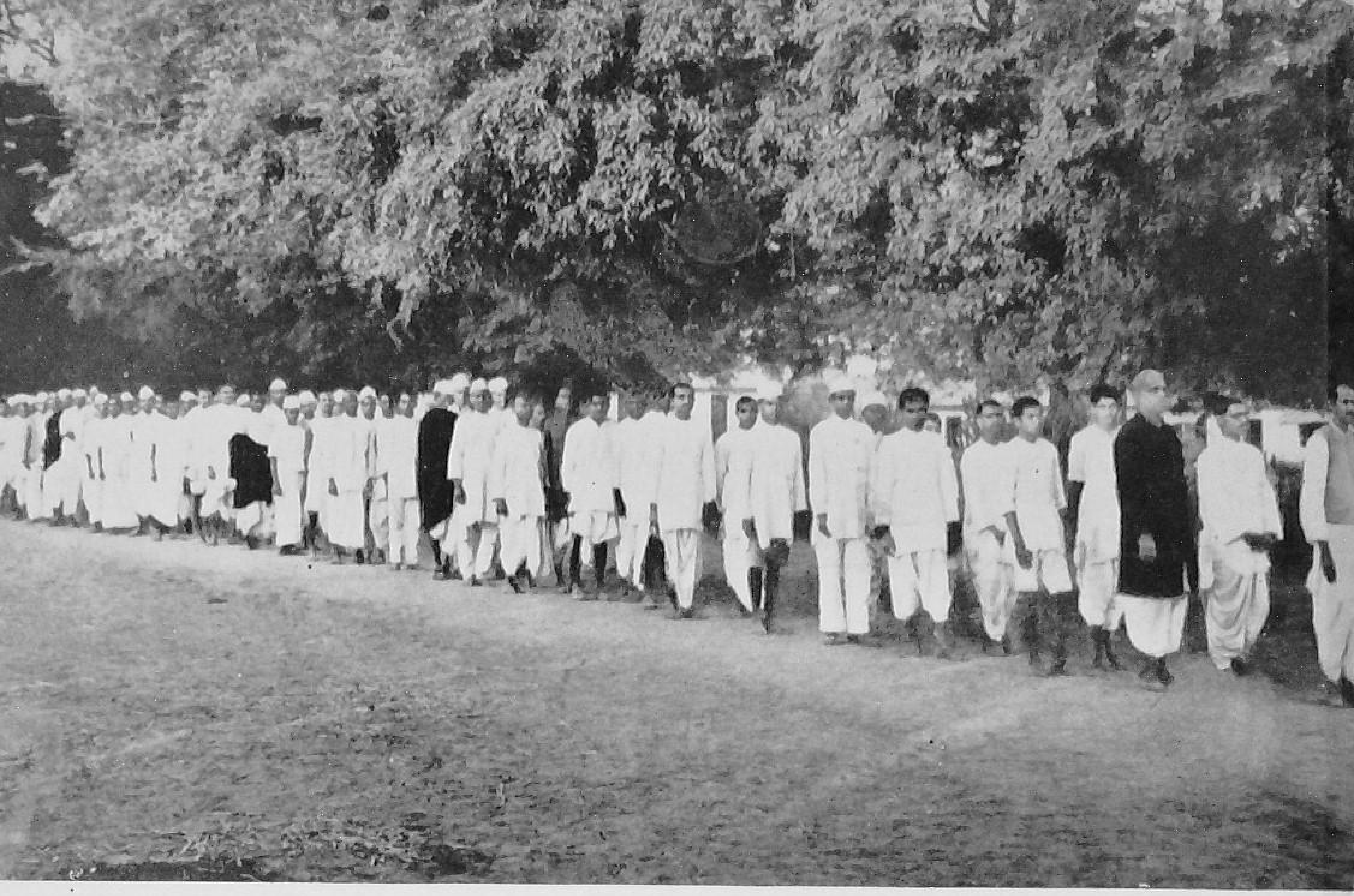
Nadiad. It was six in the evening, and thousands were thronging the wide space outside the famous temple of Santram. Gandhi was being gently massaged, as he was having his evening meal in an attic and speaking to the workers sitting around him. "Well," he said to them, "you have miscalculated the distances between places. I had no intention of covering more than ten or twelve miles at the outset, but we have been doing fifteen miles every day." He decided to have a day of rest every Monday. Two members of the party had felt the effects of fatigue and had to use a bullock cart. "God willing I hope to do the march on foot," he said. "My feeling is like that of the pilgrim to Amarnath or Badri-Kedar. For me, this is nothing less than a holy pilgrimage."

He reached Anand on Sunday evening, March 16. Monday, the day of rest, was devoted to writing replies to correspondents and articles for *Young India*. The issue of March 27 gave a clarion call, "Duty of Disloyalty". "There is no half-way house between active loyalty and active disloyalty," said Gandhi :

"In the days of democracy there is no such thing as active loyalty to a person. You are, therefore, loyal or disloyal to institutions. When you are disloyal you seek not to destroy persons but institutions. The present state is an institution which, if one knows it, can never evoke loyalty. It is corrupt. Many of its laws governing the conduct of persons are positively inhuman. Their administration is worse. Often the will of one person is the law. It may safely be said that there are as many rulers as there are districts in this country. These, called collectors, combine in their own persons the executive as well as the judicial functions. Though their acts are supposed to be governed by laws in themselves highly defective, these rulers are often capricious and are regulated by nothing but their own whims and fancies. They represent not the interests of the people but those of their foreign masters or principals. These, nearly three hundred, men form an almost secret corporation, the most powerful in the world. They are required to find a fixed minimum of revenue, they have, therefore, often been found to be most unscrupulous in their dealings with the people. This system of government is confessedly based upon a merciless exploitation of millions of the inhabitants of India. From the village headman to their personal assistants these satraps have created a class of subordinates who, whilst they cringe before their foreign masters, in

Linocut by Nandalal Bose

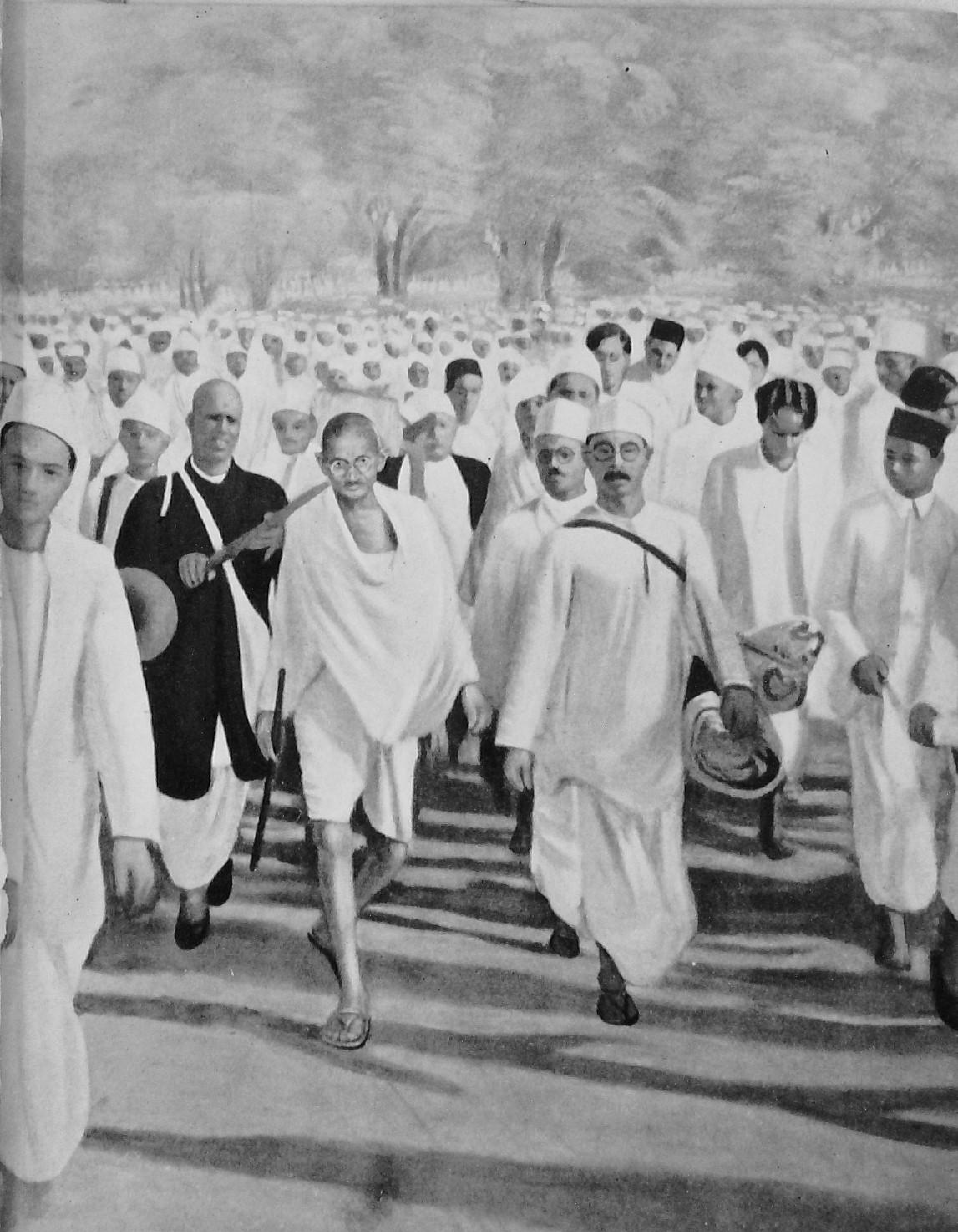
Gandhi's march to Dandi, 1930



From Sumati Morarjee Collectio

Seventy-eight ashram inmates getting ready for the salt march, March 12, 1930

On the way to Aslali—the first halt



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Dandi march in progress

Photograph : Krishnalal Bhatt

At the end of a day's march

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

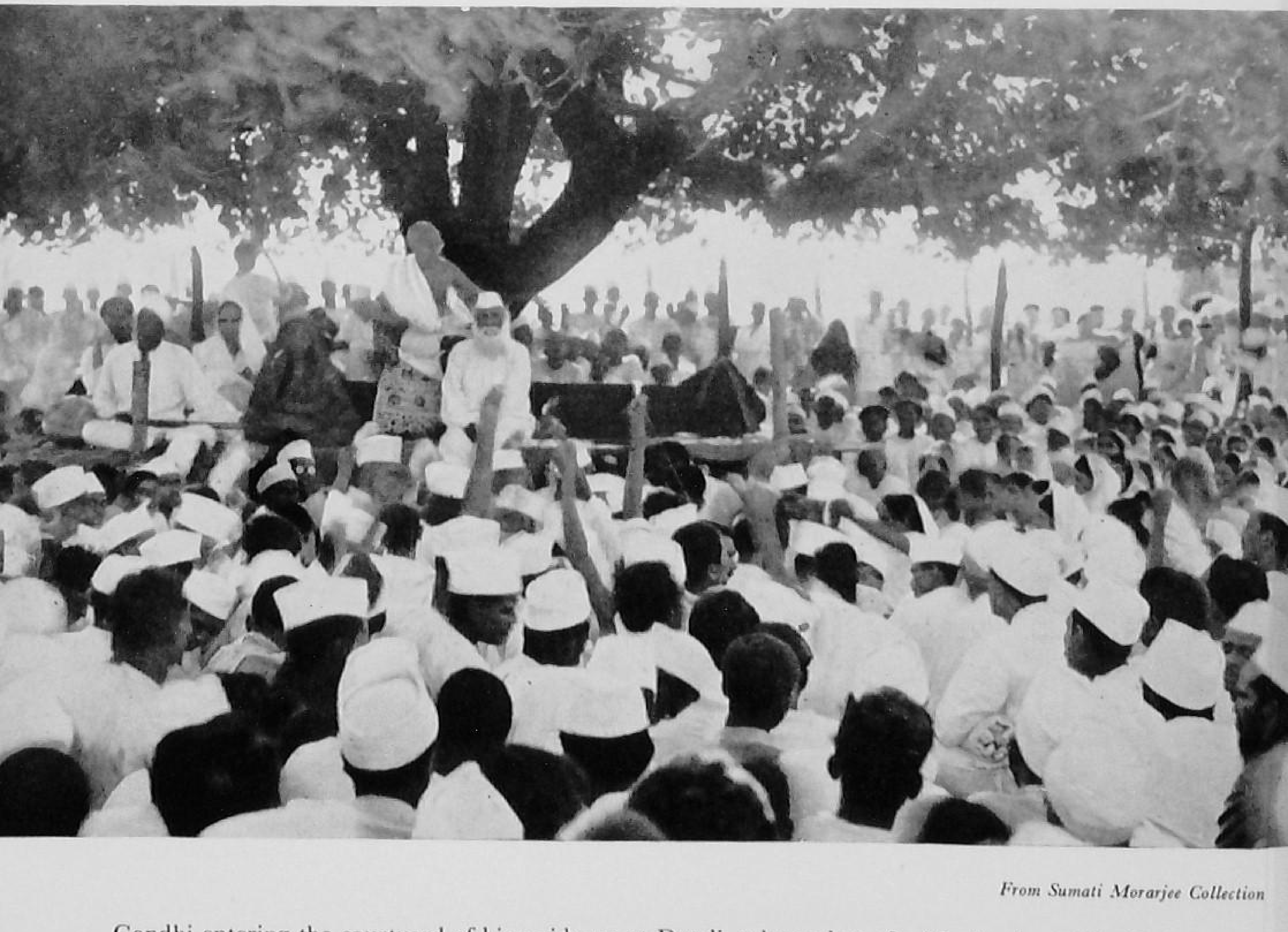
Crossing the river Narmada, near Broach, March 26

Courtesy : Kusumben Desai

Gandhi and Abbas Tyabji at a meeting in Navsari, April 3

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Mrs. Naidu receiving Gandhi at Dandi, April 5



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi entering the courtyard of his residence at Dandi, a bungalow of a Muslim host, Mr. Vasi
Addressing a public meeting at Dandi on the evening of April 5

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

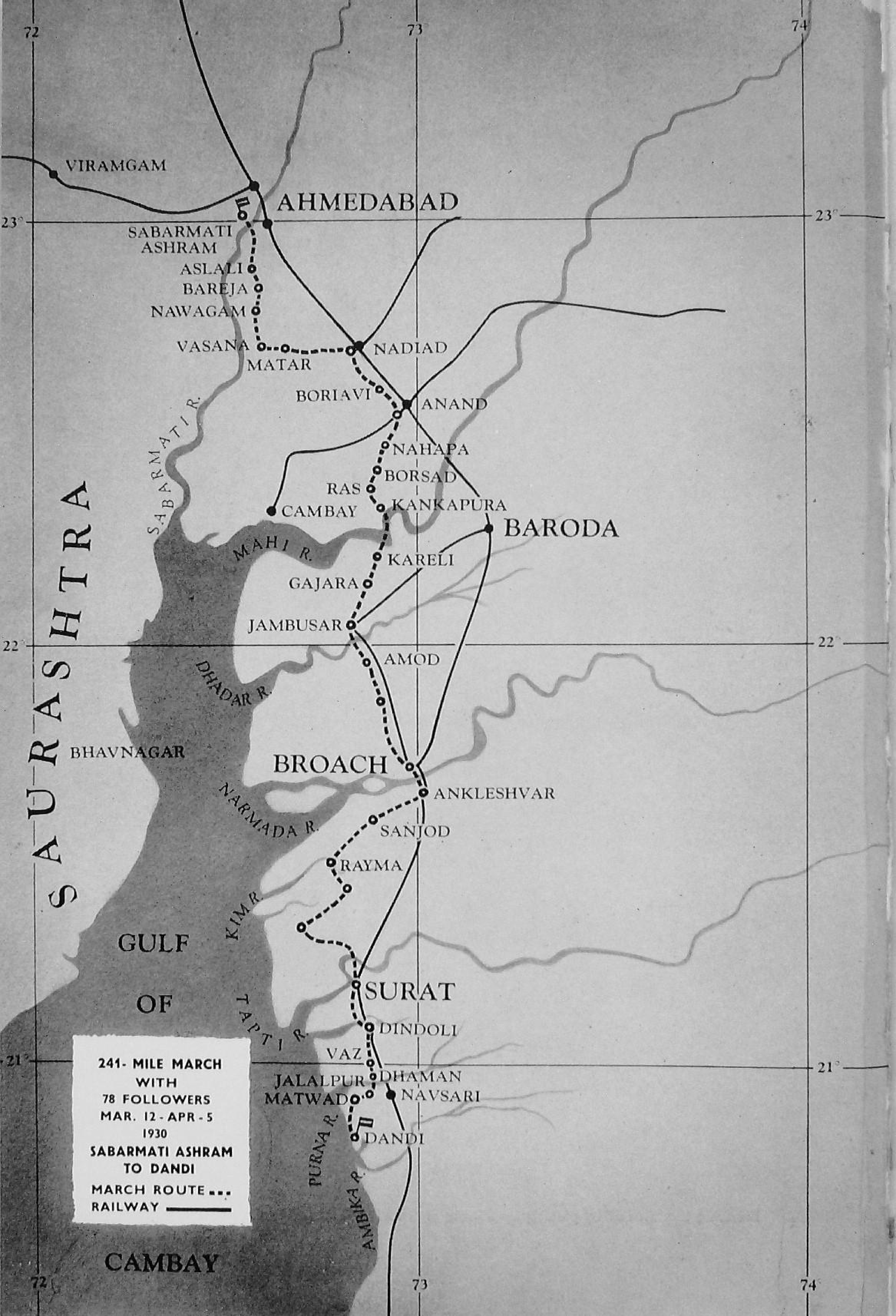
On his evening walk with Abbas Tyabji at Dandi

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi after his bath in the sea on the early morning of April 6, Dandi

Photograph: Krishna Studio

Breaking the salt law by picking up a lump of natural salt at 8.30 a.m., April 6, 1930


72
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74
VIRAMGAM
AHMEDABAD
SABARMATI ASHRAM
ASLALI
BAREJA
NAWAGAM
VASANA
MATAR
NADIAD
BORIAVI
ANAND
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KANKAPURA
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MAHI R.
KARELI
GAJARA
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23°
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DHADAR R.
BHAVNAGAR
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ANKLESHVAR
NARMADA R.
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RAYMA
KIM R.
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CAMBAY
TAPTI R.
SURAT
DINDOLI
VAZ
JALALPUR
DHAMAN
MATWAD
NAVSARI
DANDI
PURNA R.
AMBIKA R.
241- MILE MARCH
WITH
78 FOLLOWERS
MAR. 12 - APR - 5
1930
SABARMATI ASHRAM
TO DANDI
MARCH ROUTE
RAILWAY

their constant dealings with the people act so irresponsibly and so harshly as to demoralize them and by a system of terrorism render them incapable of resisting corruption. It is then the duty of those who have realized the awful evil of the system of India Government to be disloyal to it and actively and openly to preach disloyalty. Indeed, loyalty to a state so corrupt is a sin, disloyalty a virtue.

"The spectacle of three hundred million people being cowed down by living in the dread of three hundred men is demoralizing alike for the despots as for the victims. It is the duty of those who have realized the evil nature of the system, however attractive some of its features may, torn from their context, appear to be to destroy it without delay. It is their clear duty to run any risk to achieve the end.

"But it must be equally clear that it would be cowardly for three hundred million people to seek to destroy the three hundred authors or administrators of the system. It is a sign of gross ignorance to devise means of destroying these administrators or their hirelings. Moreover, they are but creatures of circumstances. The purest man entering the system will be affected by it and will be instrumental in propagating the evil. The remedy, therefore, naturally is not being enraged against the administrators and hurting them, but to non-co-operate with the system by withdrawing all the voluntary assistance possible and refusing all its so-called benefits. A little reflection will show that civil disobedience is a necessary part of non-co-operation. You assist an administration most effectively by obeying its orders and decrees. An evil administration never deserves such allegiance. Allegiance to it means partaking of the evil. A good man will, therefore, resist an evil system or administration with his whole soul. Disobedience of the laws of an evil state is, therefore, a duty. Violent disobedience deals with men who can be replaced. It leaves the evil itself untouched and often accentuates it. Non-violent, that is, civil disobedience is the only and the most successful remedy and is obligatory upon him who would dissociate himself from evil.

"There is danger in civil disobedience only because it is still only a partially tried remedy and has always to be tried in an atmosphere surcharged with violence. For, when tyranny is rampant much rage is generated among the victims. It remains latent because of their weakness and bursts in all its fury on the slightest

pretext. Civil disobedience is a sovereign method of transmuting this undisciplined life-destroying latent energy into disciplined life-saving energy whose use ensures absolute success. The attendant risk is nothing compared to the result promised. When the world has become familiar with its use, and when it has had a series of demonstrations of its successful working, there will be less risk in civil disobedience than there is in aviation, in spite of that science having reached a high stage of development."

His words had the desired effect. Several village officials and the police *patels* resigned their posts. The nation looked to Gandhi's march with greatest admiration. "The pilgrim marches onward," said Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing the youth of India. "The field of battle lies before you, the flag of India beckons to you, and freedom herself awaits your coming. Do you hesitate now, you who were but yesterday so loudly on her side? Will you be mere lookers-on in this glorious struggle and see your best and bravest face the might of a great empire which has crushed your country and her children? Who lives if India dies? Who dies if India lives?"

Gandhi reached Borsad on March 18, and Kankapura on the 19th. The same evening he crossed the river in a canoe and rested on its bank for the night. In ten days, over a hundred miles were covered and Gajra, lying half-way between Sabarmati and Dandi, was reached.

On March 21 the A.-I.C.C. met on the banks of the Sabarmati, under a heavy sense of responsibility. The fight had commenced in earnest and there was no time for wrangling. The main resolution confirmed the Working Committee's resolution authorizing Gandhi to start civil disobedience. This resolution laid down the conditions under which the various provinces should participate in it. The breaking of the salt laws was to be first undertaken in every province where it was possible and other forms of satyagraha were reserved for the second stage of the campaign. In case Gandhi was arrested, the provincial Congress committees could immediately, or at any date they determined, start civil disobedience. In case he was not arrested they should wait for him to reach the coast and start satyagraha. The A.-I.C.C. planned what should be done in case of arrests, and powers were given to the Congress President to act on behalf of the committee, in case it could not meet, and to nominate a successor to himself. Similar powers were given by

provincial and local Congress committees to their presidents in the case of emergency.

Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal went to Jambusar to see Gandhi. They spent a few hours with him there, and then marched a little distance with him. Motilal, in consultation with Gandhi, decided to make a gift of his old house in Allahabad to the nation and to rename this as Swaraj Bhawan. The palatial Anand Bhawan was to be national property from the 6th April, the first day of the National Week.

The march continued. "Today I am doing what the nation has been yearning for during the past ten years," observed Gandhi at Broach on March 26. "It was in Lahore, I had told a journalist that I saw nothing on the horizon to warrant civil resistance. But suddenly, as in a flash, I saw the light. Self-confidence returned. The voice within is clear. I must put forth all my effort or retire altogether and for all time from public life. I feel now is the time or it will be never. And so I am out for battle."

In his speeches Gandhi spared neither the Government nor the people. On March 29, at Bhatgam, in the Surat district, he made what he called an "introspective" speech. The local workers had ordered milk from Surat to be brought in a lorry, had provided for a labourer to carry a kitson burner on a stool for the night journey and incurred other expenses. He rebuked them severely:

"I am plain-spoken. I have never hesitated to describe all the mountain-high faults of the Government in appropriate language. And I have not hesitated often to picture as mountain-high our own faults appearing to us as trifling. You know that the common rule is to see our big lapses as tiny nothings. And when we do realize our blemishes somewhat, we at once pass them on to the broad shoulders of God, and say He will take care of them; and then with safety, thus assured, we proceed from lapse to lapse.

"Only this morning at the prayer time I told my companions that as we had entered the district in which we were to offer civil disobedience, we should insist on greater purification and intenser dedication. I warned them against succumbing to their pampering. We are not angels. We are very weak, easily tempted. There are many lapses to our debit. Even today some were discovered. One defaulter confessed his lapse himself, whilst I was brooding over the lapses of the pilgrims. I discovered that my warning was given

none too soon. The local workers had ordered milk from Surat to be brought in a motor lorry and they had incurred other expenses which I could not justify. I, therefore, spoke strongly about them. But that did not allay my grief. On the contrary it increased with the contemplation of the wrong done.

"In the light of these discoveries, what right had I to write to the Viceroy the letter in which I have severely criticized his salary which is more than five thousand times our average income? I could not vote Rs. 21,000 per month, not perhaps even Rs. 2,100 per month. But when could I offer such resistance? Certainly not if I was myself taking from the people an unconscionable toll. I could resist it only if my living bore some correspondence with the average income of the people. We are marching in the name of God. We profess to act on behalf of the hungry, the naked and the unemployed. I have no right to criticize the Viceregal salary, if we are costing the country say fifty times seven pice, the average daily income of our people. I have asked the workers to furnish me with an account of the expenses. And the way things are going, I should not be surprised if each of us is costing something near fifty times seven pice. What else can be the result if they will fetch for me from whatever source possible, the choicest oranges and grapes, if they will bring 120 when I should want 12 oranges, if when I need one pound of milk, they will produce three? What else can be the result if we would take all the dainties you may place before us under the excuse that we would hurt your feeling if we did not take them. You give us guavas and grapes and we eat them because they are a free gift from a princely farmer. And, then, imagine me with an easy conscience writing the Viceregal letter on costly glazed paper with a fountain pen, a free gift from some accommodating friend! Will this behove you and me? Can a letter so written produce the slightest effect?

"To live thus would be to illustrate the immortal verse of Akhobhagat who says, 'stolen food is like eating unprocessed mercury.' And to live above the means befitting a poor country is to live on stolen food. This battle can never be won by living on stolen food. Nor did I bargain to set out on this march for living above our means. We expect thousands of volunteers to respond to the call. It will be impossible to keep them on extravagant terms. My life has become so busy that I get little time to come in close

touch even with the eighty companions so as to be able to identify them individually. There was, therefore, no course open to me but to unburden my soul in public. I expect you to understand the central point of my message. If you have not, there is no hope of swaraj through the present effort. We must become real trustees of the dumb millions.

"I have exposed our weaknesses to the public gaze. I have not given you all the details, but I have told you enough to enable you to realize our unworthiness to write the letter to the Viceroy.

"Now the local workers will understand my agony. Weak, ever exposed to temptations, ever failing, why will you tempt us and pamper us? We may not introduce these incandescent burners in our villages. It is enough that one hundred thousand men prey upon three hundred millions. But how will it be when we ourselves begin to prey upon one another? In that event dogs will lick our corpses.

"These lights are merely a sample of the extravagance, I have in mind. My purpose is to wake you up from the torpor. Let the volunteers account for every pice they spend. I am more capable of offering satyagraha against ourselves than against the Government. I have taken many years, before embarking upon civil resistance against the Government. But I should not take as many days, for offering it against ourselves.

"Therefore, in your hospitality towards servants like us, I would have you to be miserly rather than lavish. I shall not complain of unavoidable absence of things. In order to procure goat's milk for me, you may not deprive poor women of milk for their children. It would be like poison if you did. Nor may milk and vegetables be brought from Surat. We can do without them if necessary. Do not resort to motor-cars on the slightest pretext. The rule is, do not ride, if you can walk. This is not a battle to be conducted with money. It will be quite impossible to sustain a mass movement with money. Any way it is beyond me to conduct the campaign with a lavish display of money.

"Extravagance has no room in this campaign. If then we cannot gather crowds unless we carry on a hurricane expensive propaganda, I would be satisfied to address only half a dozen men and women. Success does not depend upon our high skill, it depends solely upon God. And He only helps the vigilant and the humble.

"We may not consider anybody as low. I observed that you had provided for the night journey a heavy kitson burner mounted on a stool which a poor labourer carried on his head. This was a very humiliating sight. This man was being goaded to walk faster. I could not bear the sight. I put on speed and outraced the whole company. But it was no use. The man was made to run after me. The humiliation was complete. If the weight had to be carried, I should have loved to see some one among ourselves carrying it. We would then soon dispense both with the stool and the burner. No labourer would carry such a load on his head. We rightly object to *begar*. But what was this if not *begar*? Remember that in swaraj we would expect one drawn from the so-called lower class to preside over India's destiny. If then we do not mend our ways, there is no swaraj such as you and I have put before the people.

"From my outpouring you may not infer that I shall weaken in my resolve to carry on the struggle. It will continue no matter how co-workers or others act. For me there is no turning back, whether I am alone or joined by thousands. I would rather die a dog's death and have my bones licked by dogs, than that I should return to the ashram a broken man."

Turning to the women, he broke down: "I admit that I have not well used the money you have given, out of the abundance of your love. You are entitled to regard me as one of those wretches depicted in the verses sung in the beginning. Shun me."

On April 1, Gandhi reached Surat and addressed 80,000 people on the banks of the Tapti. He admonished them to participate in the struggle and break the salt monopoly of the Government as this would be a sure step towards swaraj. In the course of his speech at Navsari, the next halt, Gandhi said: "Either I shall return with what I want or my dead body will float in the ocean." Writing in *Young India* dated April 3, he announced: "If there is no previous cancelling, they all may regard this as the word from me that all are free, and those who are ready are expected to start mass civil disobedience regarding the salt laws, as from the 6th April. The only stipulation for civil disobedience is perfect observance of non-violence."

Dandi was reached on April 5. The 241-mile march came to an end on the twenty-fourth day. Gandhi's prayer on the morning of April 6 was markedly solemn. In the course of his speech, he

announced that if he was arrested, the orders must be taken from Abbas Tyabji and after that from Mrs. Naidu. He concluded his address requesting the people not to offer satyagraha that day, as he considered his offer of civil disobedience as a great *yajna* and he did not want demonstrations.

Soon after the prayers, Gandhi with his followers proceeded for bath in the sea. At 8.30 he bent down and picked up a lump of natural salt. Mrs. Naidu hailed him as "law-breaker". Thousands of people witnessed the solemn ceremony. No policeman was on the scene. Immediately after, Gandhi issued a statement:

"Now that the technical or ceremonial breach of the salt law has been committed, it is now open to any one who would take the risk of prosecution under the salt law to manufacture salt, wherever he wishes and wherever it is convenient. My advice is that workers should everywhere manufacture salt, and where they know how to prepare clean salt, make use of it and instruct the villagers likewise, telling the villager at the same time, that he runs the risk of being prosecuted. Or, in other words, the villager should be fully instructed as to the incidence of the salt tax, and the manner of breaking the laws and regulations connected with it so as to have the salt tax repealed.

"It should be made quite clear to the villagers that the breach is open, and in no way stealthy. This condition being known, they may manufacture salt, or can help themselves to the salt manufactured by nature in creeks and pits near the seashore, use it for themselves and their cattle, and sell it to those who will buy it, it being well understood that all such people are committing a breach of the salt law and running the risk of a prosecution, or even without a prosecution, are to be subjected by the so-called salt officers to harassment.

"This war against the salt tax should be continued during the National Week, up to 13th April. Those who are not engaged in this sacred work should themselves do vigorous propaganda for the boycott of foreign cloth and the use of khaddar. They should also endeavour or manufacture as much khaddar as possible. As to this and the prohibition of liquor, I am preparing a message for the women who, I am becoming more and more convinced, can make a larger contribution than men towards the attainment of independence. I feel that they will be worthier interpreters of non-violence

than men, not because they are weak, as men in their arrogance believe them to be, but because they have greater courage of the right type, and immeasurably greater spirit of self-sacrifice."

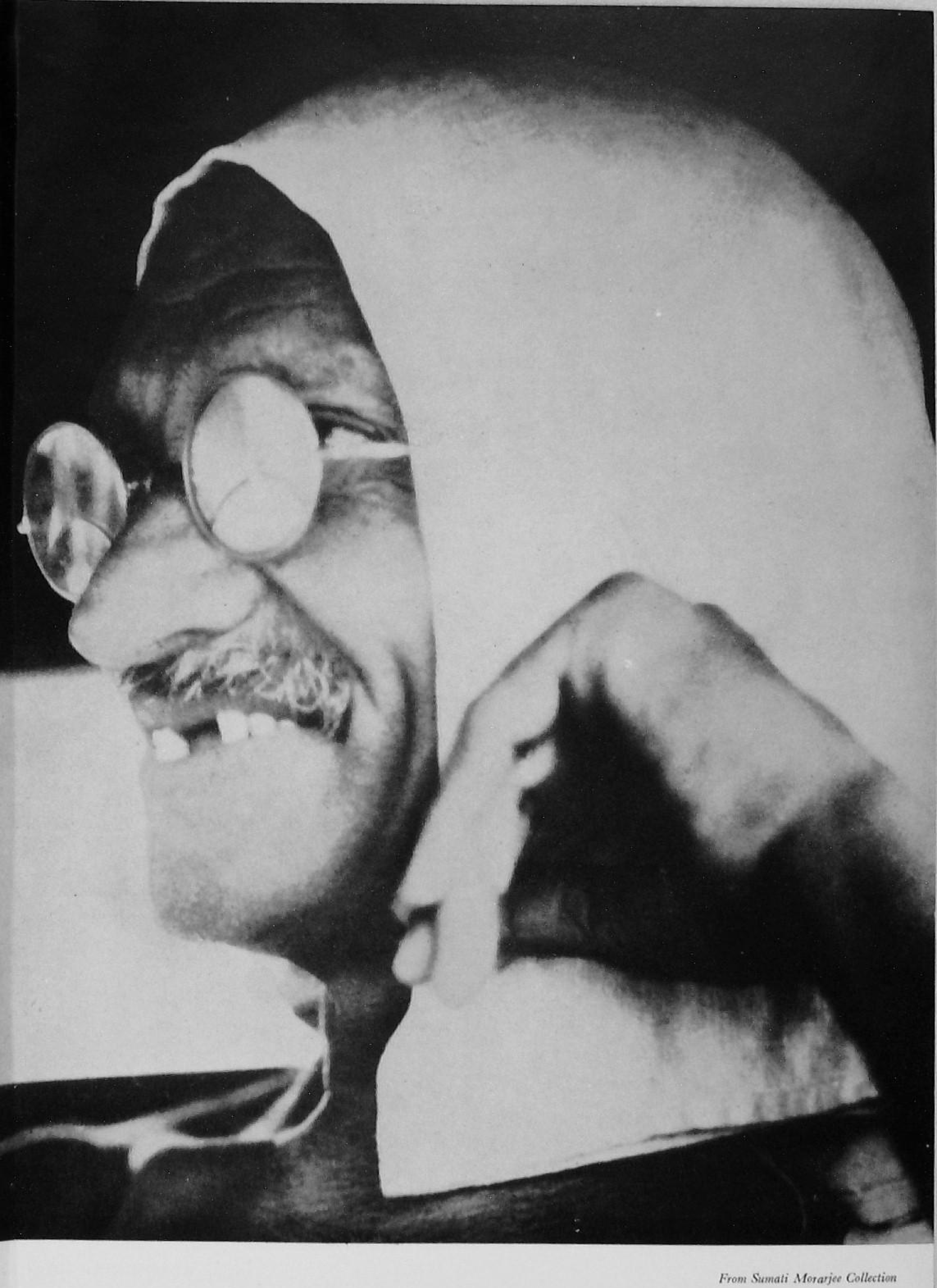
Gandhi's breaking of the salt law at Dandi was the signal for which the nation had been waiting. Day after day, he went to the surrounding villages and delivered the message of disobedience. He himself inaugurated the campaign of cutting down the toddy trees, which he argued were useless except for their special, harmful purpose, and impoverish the soil. Meanwhile he was sending his despatches to *Young India*—brief description of the civil resistance, editorial comments, and detailed instructions to workers: "Let me distinguish between the call of 1920 and the present call. The call of 1920 was a call for preparation, today it is a call for engaging in a final conflict."

A large quantity of contraband salt was forcibly seized, but later a large quantity was sold or distributed in the village of Dandi. There were no arrests on April 6. "Let the Government arrest them or not, they must do their duty," said Gandhi addressing a meeting in the afternoon. "From tomorrow everybody is free to take salt wherever he finds it, but they must see that the Government does not tax salt."

On April 7, fell the day of silence and, therefore, Gandhi did not go out in the morning. His volunteers repeated the previous day's programme; the police did not interfere with them. But elsewhere, not far from Dandi, all illicit salt was forcibly confiscated. Hearing of the scuffle and arrests at Aat, Gandhi repaired to the spot to observe things for himself. The first drawing of blood had brought down practically the whole village to the scene, and men and women descended to the channel and began to dig out salt. Gandhi was very pleased to see a band of simple women carrying in their saris illicit salt.

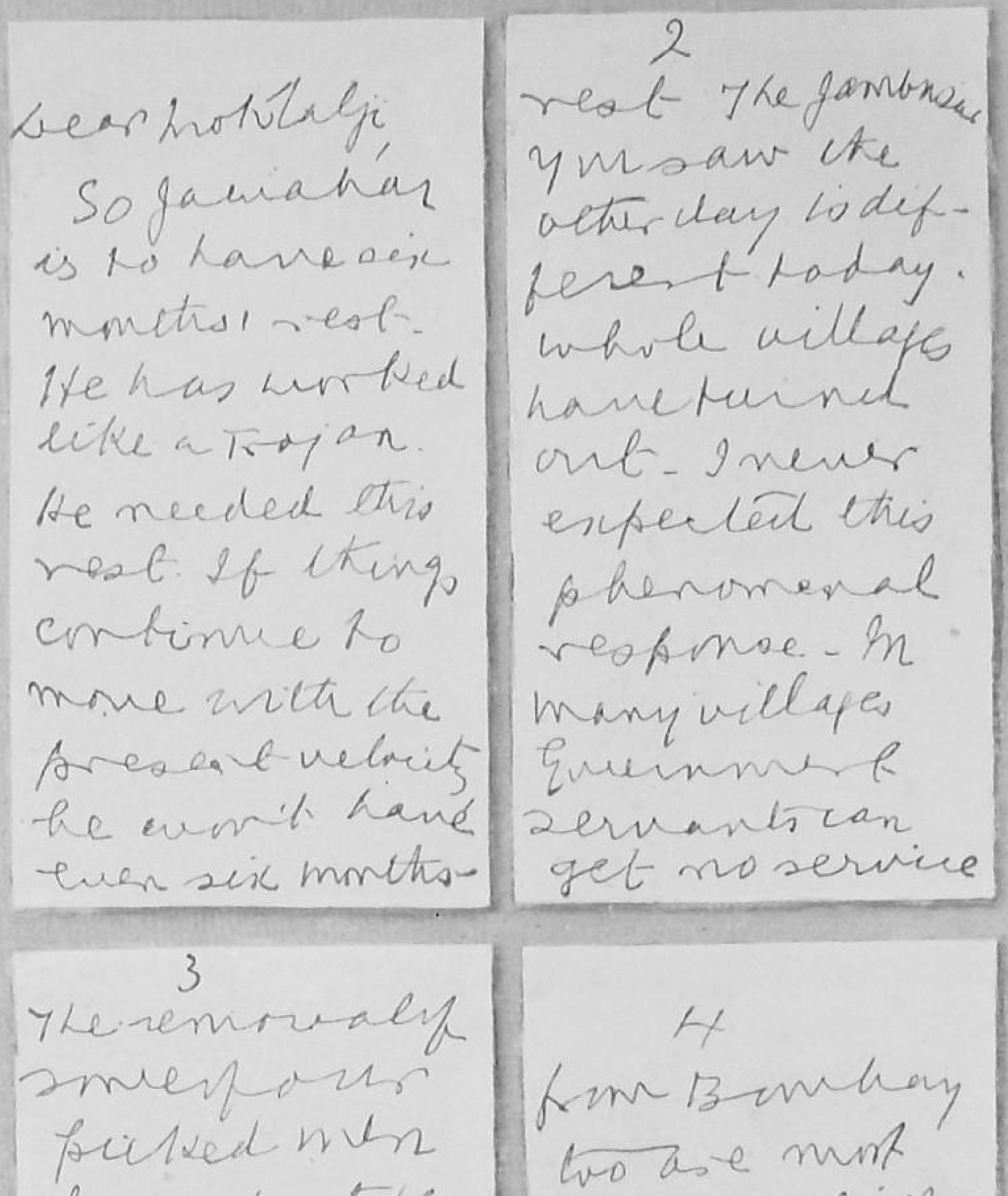
April 7 marked the beginning of the manufacture of illicit salt throughout Gujarat and in the city of Bombay. Arrests of the lawbreakers mounted." I congratulate the Government," said Gandhi, "on having commenced arrests in right earnest."

On the morning of April 8, Gandhi broke the salt law at Aat. There were rumours of his impending arrest and in anticipation of that, he gave this message: "Let not my companions or the people at large be perturbed over my arrest, for it is not I but God



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi, aged 61, Karadi, April 1930



Dear Motilalji,

So Jawahar is to have six months' rest. He has worked like a Trojan. He needed this rest. If things continue to move with the present velocity he won't have even six months—

2

rest. The Jambusar you saw the other day is different today. Whole villages have turned out. I never expected this phenomenal response. In many villages Government servants can get no service.

3

The removal of some of our picked men has only stiffened the ~~op~~ resistance of the people. But enough of this optimism. He will be a wise man who can say what will happen tomorrow. Accounts arriving

4

from Bombay too are most encouraging. I take it you are following the pages of Young India.

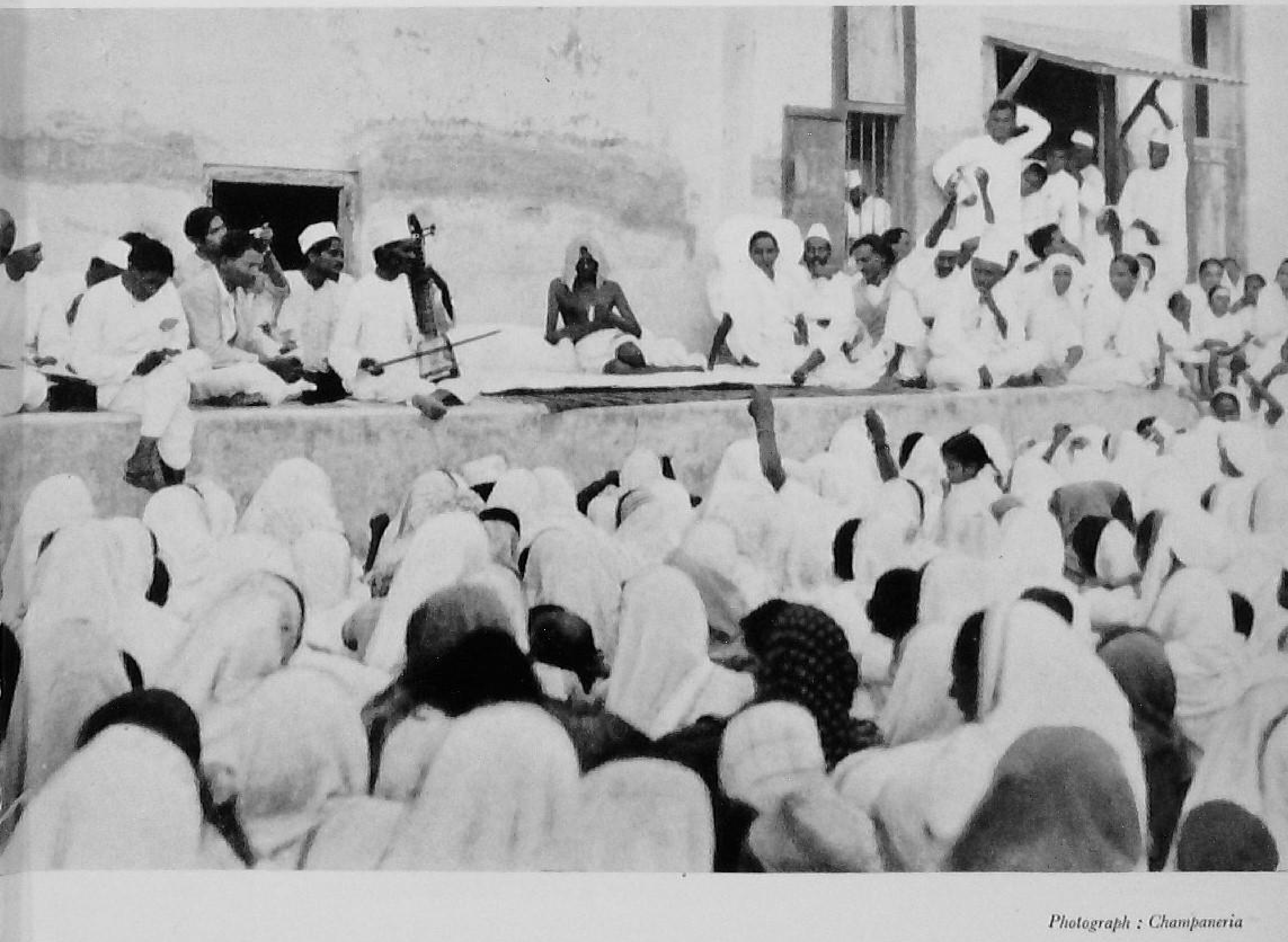
How are you keeping?

Dandi 14-4-30

Yours
M K Gandhi

Courtesy: Allahabad Municipal Museum

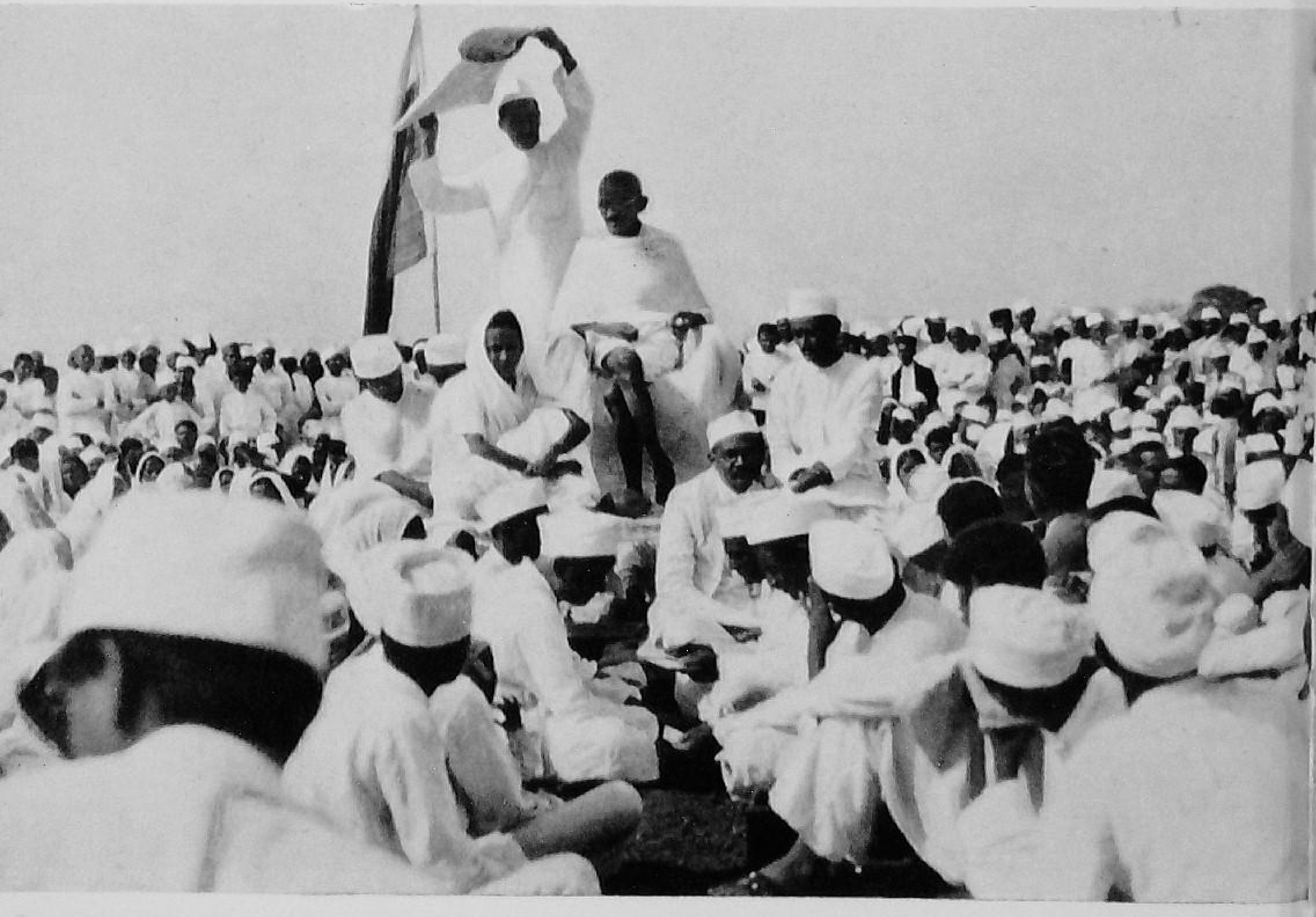
Gandhi's letter to Motilal Nehru from Dandi, April 14, 1930



Photograph : Champaneria

Gandhi at Patidar ashram, Surat, April 1930

Addressing women at Surat



Photograph : Champaneria

Gandhi addressing a meeting at Karadi, April 1930
Addressing a meeting at Bharthan, Surat district, April 1930

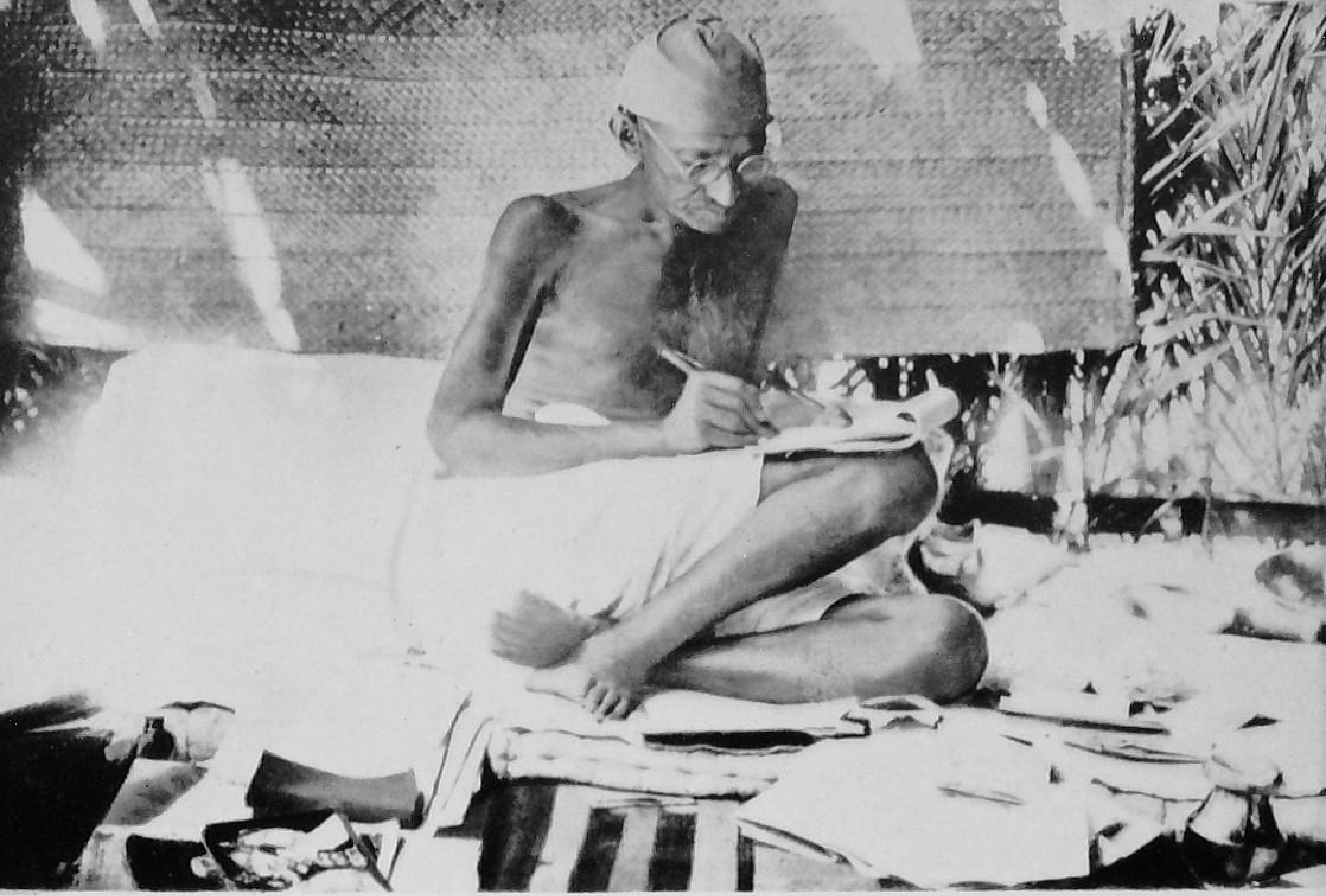
Photograph : Champaneria

At the meeting in Olpad, Surat district, April 1930
Gandhi inaugurating the breaking of the salt law at Pinjrat, Surat district, April 1930

Gandhi leading the villagers' raid
Gandhi preaching the breach of salt law

Photograph : Champaneria

on Pinjrat salt depot, April 1930
at Bhimrad, Surat district, April 1930

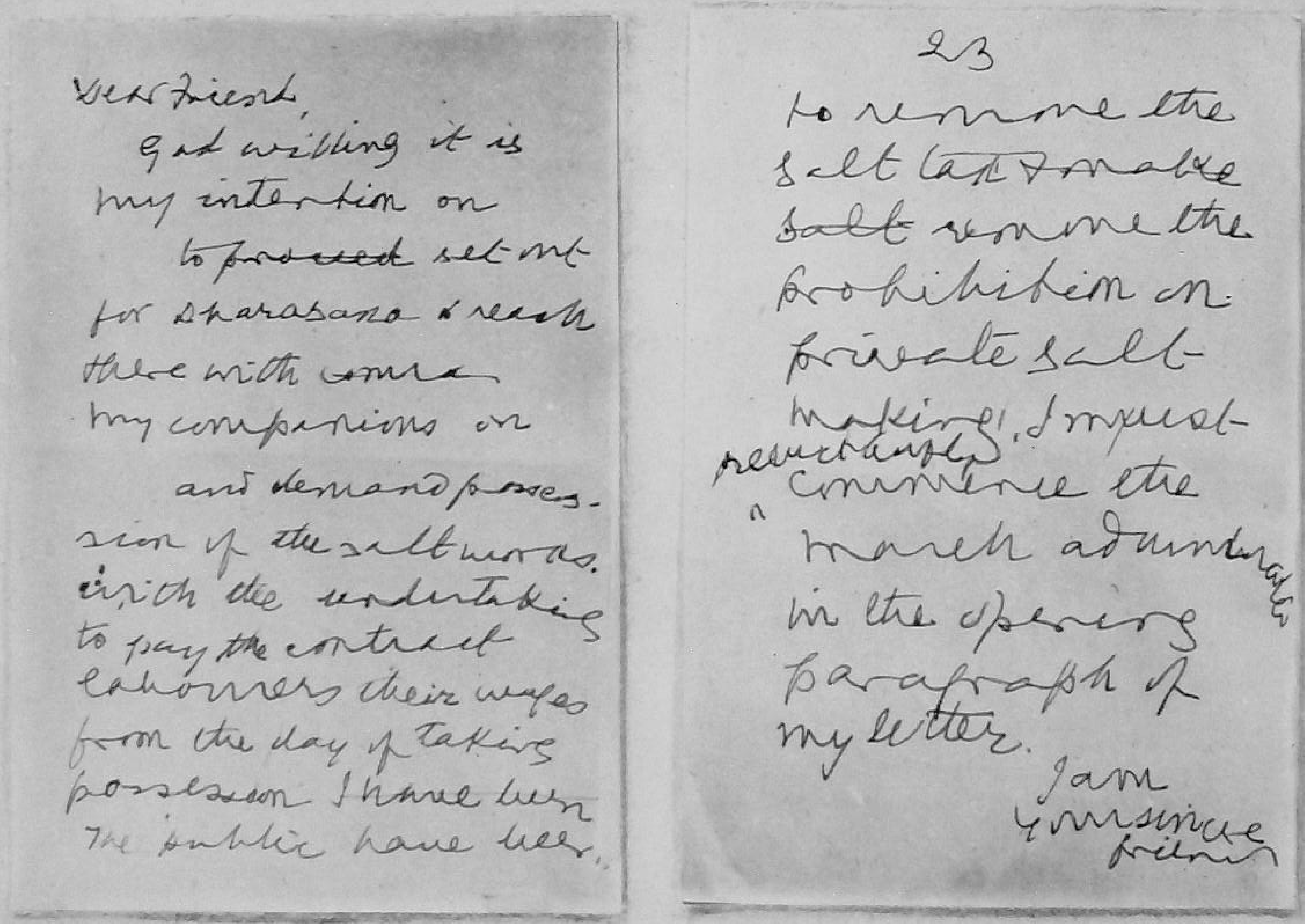


From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi at work, Karadi camp, May 1930
His hut at Karadi camp

Painting by Vinayak S. Masoji

Midnight arrest, Karadi, May 4, 1930

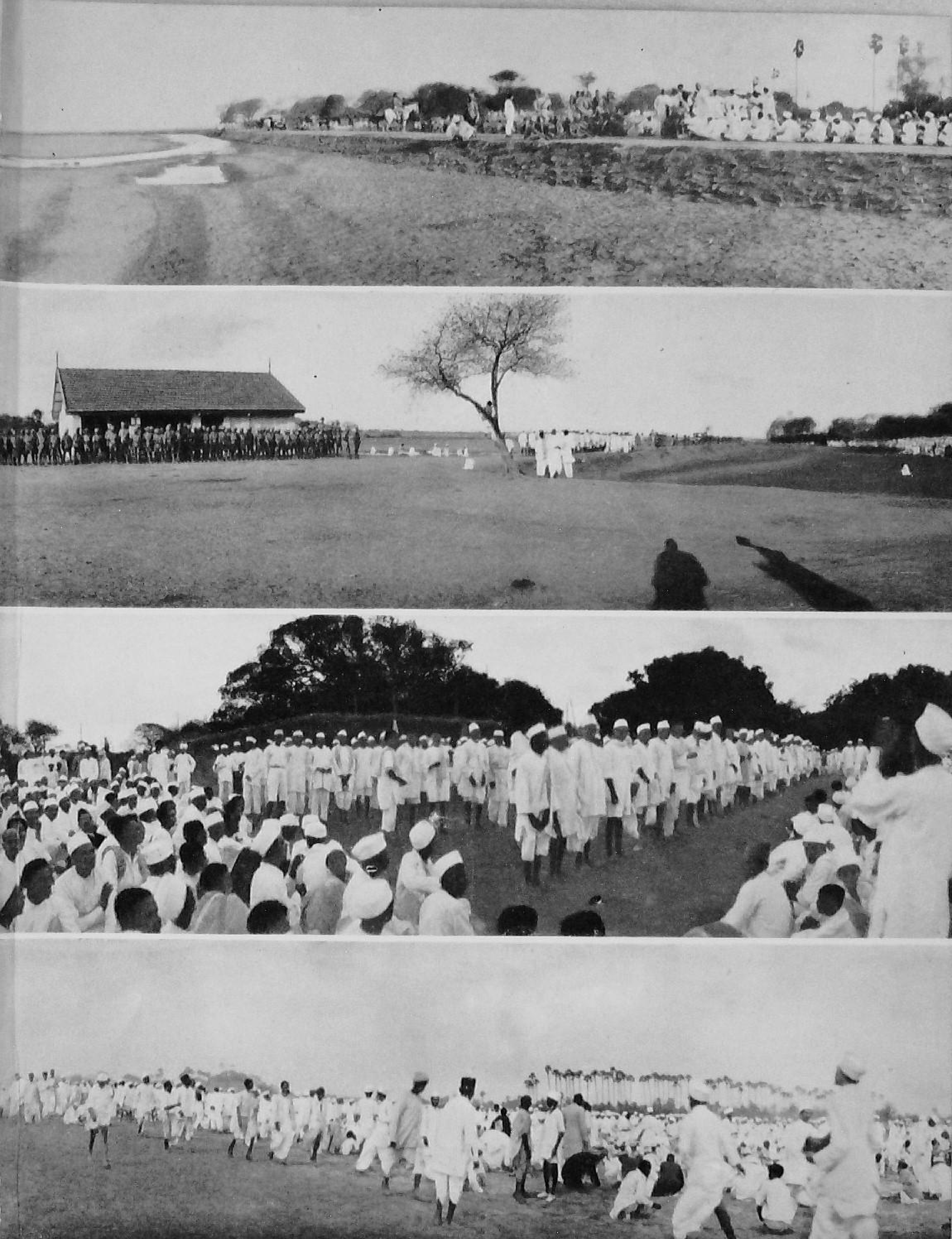


Dear friend,
God willing it is
my intention on
to ~~proceed~~ set out
for Dharasana & reach
there with ~~compa~~
my companions on
and demand posses-
sion of the salt works
with the undertaking
to pay the contract
labourers their wages
from the day of taking
possession. ~~I have been~~
The public have been

23
to remove the
salt tax & make
~~salt~~ remove the
prohibition on
private salt-
making. I request
reluctantly commence the
march adumbrated
in the opening
paragraph of
my letter.
I am
Yours sincere
friend

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

First and last page from Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy on the eve of his arrest, May 1930



Photograph : Champaneria

The mass raid of Dharasana salt depot led by Mrs. Naidu, May 21, 1930

Courtesy: N. J. Nalawala

Scenes of police atrocities during the struggle, 1930-31

who is guiding this movement. At present India's self-respect, in fact, her all, is symbolized as it were in a handful of salt in the satyagrahis' hand. Let the fist holding it, therefore, be broken, but let there be no voluntary surrender of the salt. Our path has already been chalked out for us. Let every village manufacture or fetch contraband salt, sisters should picket liquor shops, opium dens and foreign-cloth-dealers' shops. Young and old in every home should ply the *takli* and spin, and get woven heaps of yarn every day. Foreign cloth should be burnt. Hindus should eschew untouchability. Hindus, Musalmans, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians should all achieve heart unity. Let the majority rest content with what remains after the minorities have been satisfied. Let students leave Government schools, and Government servants resign their service and devote themselves to service of the people, and we shall find that Purna Swaraj will come knocking at our doors."

He gave a fighting programme to the women:

"The impatience of some sisters to join the fight is to me a healthy sign. It has led to the discovery that, however attractive the campaign against salt tax may be, for them to confine themselves to it would be to change a pound for a penny. They will be lost in the crowd. There will be in it no suffering for which they are thirsting.

"In this non-violent warfare, their contribution should be much greater than men's. To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, and has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman.

"I have nursed this thought now for years. When the women of the ashram insisted on being taken along with men, something within me told me that they were destined to do greater work in this struggle than merely breaking salt laws.

"I feel that I have now found that work. The picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops by men, though it succeeded beyond expectations up to a point, for a while, in 1921, failed because violence crept in. If a real impression is to be created, picketing

must be resumed. If it remains peaceful to the end, it will be the quickest way of educating the people concerned. It must never be a matter of coercion but conversion, moral suasion. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?

"Prohibition of intoxicating liquors and drugs and the boycott of foreign cloth have ultimately to be by law. But the law will not come till pressure from below is felt in no uncertain manner.

"That the both are vitally necessary for the nation, nobody will dispute. Drink and drugs sap the moral well-being of those who are given to the habit. Foreign cloth undermines the economic foundations of the nation and throws millions out of employment. The distress in each case is felt in the home and, therefore, by the women. Only those women who have drunkards as their husbands know what havoc the drink devil works in homes that once were orderly and peace-giving. Millions of women in hamlets know what unemployment means. Today the Charkha Sangh covers over one hundred thousand women against less than ten thousand men.

"Let the women take up these two activities, specialize in them, and they would contribute more than men to national freedom. They would have access of power and self-confidence to which they have hitherto been strangers.

"Their appeal to the merchants and buyers of foreign cloth and to the liquor dealers and addicts to the habit cannot but melt their hearts. At any rate, the women can never be suspected of doing or intending violence to these four classes. Nor can Government long remain supine to an agitation so peaceful and so resistless.

"The charm will lie in the agitation being initiated and controlled exclusively by the women. They may take and should get as much assistance as they need from men, but the men should be in strict subordination to them.

"In this agitation thousands of women, literate and illiterate, can take part. Highly educated women have in this appeal of mine an opportunity of actively identifying themselves with the masses and helping them both morally and materially.

"They will find when they study the subject of the foreign cloth boycott that it is impossible save through khadi. Millowners will themselves admit that mills can't manufacture in the near future enough cloth for Indian requirements. Given a proper atmosphere, khadi can be manufactured in our villages, in our countless homes.

Let it be the privilege of the women of India to produce this atmosphere by devoting every available minute to the spinning of yarn. The question of production of khadi is surely a question of spinning enough yarn. During the ten days of the march, under pressure of circumstances, I have discovered the potency of the *takli* which I had not realized before. It is a wonder worker. In mere playfulness my companions have without interrupting any other activity spun enough yarn to weave four square yards per day of khadi of twelve counts. Khadi as a war measure is not to be beaten. The moral results of the two reforms are obviously great. The political result will be no less great. Prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs means the loss of twenty-five crores of revenue. Boycott of foreign cloth means the saving by India's millions of at least sixty crores. Both these achievements would momentarily be superior to the repeal of the salt tax. It is impossible to evaluate the moral results of the two reforms.

"But there is no excitement and no adventure in the liquor and foreign cloth picketing, some sisters may retort. Well, if they will put their whole heart into this agitation, they will find more than enough excitement and adventure. Before they have done with the agitation, they might even find themselves in prison. It is not improbable that they may be insulted and even injured bodily. To suffer such insult and injury would be their pride. Such suffering, if it comes to them, will hasten the end."

Government repression was intense, brutal. Even the palanquins bearing *purdanashin* women were searched in order to prevent the transport of illicit salt. Civil disobedience everywhere was answered with firing and lathi charges. Gandhi wrote: "If we are to stand the final heat of the battle, we must learn to stand our ground in the face of cavalry or baton charges and allow ourselves to be trampled under horses' hoofs, or be bruised with baton charges. The people passed the test honourably, and National Week ending on April 13 brought encouraging news.

On April 14, Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested and that very day he was tried in prison, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment under the Salt Act. In anticipation of his arrest, he had nominated Gandhi to act as the Congress President but, he having declined, Motilal Nehru became the acting president. After the arrest of Jawaharlal Nehru, the movement flourished with renewed vigour.

There was firing in Calcutta, Madras, Karachi, and lathi charges all over India. Processions and meetings were banned. The people retaliated by intensive picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor booths. In Bombay, 200 volunteers secured six donkeys, decked them in foreign clothes—hats and all—and dividing themselves in three batches, paraded the prominent streets exhorting the public to burn foreign cloth. Women volunteers from Sabarmati ashram, led by Kasturbai Gandhi, launched on the picketing of the liquor shops from April 17.

The movement spread like wild fire all over the land. Vithalbhai Patel tendered his resignation of the Speakership of the Assembly and wrote to the Viceroy on April 25: "Thousands are prepared to lay down their lives and hundreds of thousands are ready to court imprisonment."

Mass civil disobedience went on for a time without any hitch. But in the second week, the news was not altogether to Gandhi's liking. There were disturbances in Calcutta, Karachi and in other places. On April 18, police armouries at Chittagong were raided. The revolutionary upsurge reached its highest point in Peshawar where huge mass demonstrations were held on April 23. The next day, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the leader of the newly formed Khudai Khidmatgar—Servants of God—or the Red Shirts, was arrested. Thousands of people surrounded the place of his detention, and there was a mammoth demonstration in Peshawar. Armoured cars were sent to cow down angry demonstrators; one armoured car was burnt, its occupants escaping; thereupon wholesale firing on the crowds was followed by hundreds of deaths and casualties. Two platoons of the Second Battalion of the 18th Royal Garhwali Rifles, Hindu Troops in the midst of a Muslim crowd, refused to fire, broke ranks, and a number of them handed over their arms. Immediately after this, the military and the police were completely withdrawn from Peshawar; from April 25 to May 4, the city was in the hands of the people, until powerful British forces, with air squadrons, were concentrated to "recapture" Peshawar; there was no resistance. Seventeen men of the Garhwali Rifles were subjected to heavy sentences.

Writing under "Black Regime", Gandhi reviewed the outstanding events: "If the Government neither arrest nor declare salt free they will find people marching to be shot, rather than be tortured.

I appeal to those who believe in violence not to disturb the free flow of non-violent demonstration."

While events were taking a sharp turn, the Viceroy promulgated on April 27 an ordinance, reviving the Press Act of 1910. "Whether we realize it or not, for some days past, we have been living under a veiled form of martial law," wrote Gandhi. "Pressmen, if they are worthy of public opinion, will not be frightened by the ordinance. Let us realize the wise dictum of Thoreau, that it is difficult, under tyrannical rule, for honest men to be wealthy. If we have decided to hand over our bodies without murmur to the authorities, let us also equally be ready to hand over our property to them and not sell our souls." He promptly asked the manager of the Navajivan Press to allow the press to be forfeited rather than deposit security, if the Government demanded it.

Government repression was intense. On May 1, Gandhi wrote on "Goonda Raj": "Even Dyerism pales into insignificance. The duty before the people is clear. They must answer this organized hooliganism with great suffering." His own reaction was to make a more definite breach of the salt law at Dharasana. A notice to the Viceroy was prepared:

"God willing it is my intention on . . . to set out for Dharasana and reach there with my companions on . . . and demand possession of the salt works. The public have been told that Dharasana is a private property. This is mere camouflage. It is as effectively under Government control as the Viceroy's House. Not a pinch of salt can be removed without the previous sanction of the authorities.

"It is possible for you to prevent this raid, as it has been playfully and mischievously called, in three ways: by removing the salt tax; by arresting me and my party, unless the country can, as I hope it will, replace every one taken away; by sheer goondaism unless every head broken is replaced, as I hope it will.

"It is not without hesitation that the step has been decided upon. I had hoped that the Government would fight the civil resisters in a civilized manner. I could have had nothing to say if in dealing with the civil resisters the Government has satisfied itself with applying the ordinary processes of law. Instead, whilst the known leaders have been dealt with more or less according to the legal formality, the rank and file has been often very savagely and in some cases even indecently assaulted. Had these been isolated cases,

they might have been overlooked. But accounts have come to me from Bengal, Bihar, Utkal, U.P., Delhi and Bombay confirming the experiences of Gujarat of which I have ample evidence at my disposal. In Karachi, Peshawar and Madras the firing would appear to have been unprovoked and unnecessary. Bones have been broken, private parts have been squeezed for the purpose of making the volunteers give up, to the Government valueless, to the volunteers, precious salt. At Mathura, an assistant magistrate is said to have snatched the national flag from a ten-year-old boy. In Bengal there seem to have been only a few prosecutions and assaults about salt, but unthinkable cruelties are said to have been practised in the act of snatching flags from volunteers. Paddy fields are reported to have been burnt, and eatables forcibly taken. A vegetable market in Gujarat has been raided, because the dealers would not sell vegetables to officials. I ask you to believe the accounts given by men pledged to truth.

"And now you have sprung upon the country a press ordinance surpassing any hitherto known in India. You have found a short-cut through the law's delay in the matter of trial of Bhagat Singh and others, by doing away with the ordinary procedure. Is it any wonder if I call all these official activities and inactivities a veiled form of martial law? Yet this is only the fifth week of the struggle.

"Before then the reign of terrorism that has begun overwhelms India, I feel that I must take a bolder step, if possible divert your wrath in a cleaner, if more drastic channel. You may not know the things that I have described. You may not even now believe in them. I can but invite your serious attention to them.

"Anyway I feel that it would be cowardly on my part not to invite you to disclose to the full the leonine paws of authority so that the people, who are suffering tortures and destruction of their property, may not feel that, I, who had perhaps been the chief party inspiring them to action that has brought to right light the Government in its true colours, had left any stone unturned to work out the satyagraha programme as fully as it was possible under given circumstances.

"For, according to the science of satyagraha, the greater the repression and lawlessness on the part of authority, the greater should be the suffering courted by the victims. Success is the certain result of suffering of the extremest character, voluntarily undergone.

I know the dangers attendant upon the methods adopted by me. But the country is not likely to mistake my meaning. I dare not postpone action on any cause whatsoever, if non-violence is the force the seers of the world have claimed it to be, and if I am not to belie my own extensive experience of its working.

"But I would fain avoid the further step. I would ask you to remove the tax which many of your illustrious countrymen have condemned in unmeasured terms and which, as you could not have failed to observe has evoked universal protest and resentment expressed in civil disobedience. You may condemn civil disobedience as much as you like. Will you prefer violent revolt to civil disobedience? If you say, as you have said, that the civil disobedience must end in violence, history will pronounce the verdict that the British Government not bearing, because not understanding non-violence, goaded human nature to violence which it could understand and deal with. But in spite of the goading, I shall hope that God will give the people of India wisdom and strength to withstand every temptation and provocation to violence.

"If, therefore, you cannot see your way to remove the salt tax and remove the prohibition on private salt-making, I must reluctantly commence the march to Dharasana."

It was to be a gruelling battle, the climax of the campaign. But on May 4, Gandhi was arrested in a strange manner. At 12.45 a.m. the District Magistrate of Surat, two officers armed with pistols and some thirty policemen armed with rifles, silently and suddenly came into the peaceful little compound in Karadi camp, three miles from Dandi. They surrounded the hut. The British officer went up to Gandhi's bed, turned a torchlight on him and asked: "Are you Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi?" "Do you want me?" he asked gently and said, "Please give me time for ablutions." There was no objection. While he cleaned his teeth, the officers, time-piece in hand, stood watching him. And as the volunteers gathered round Gandhi, the police made a cordon. Soon the cordon was relaxed and the volunteers had access to the leader. "Mr. District Magistrate, may I know the charge under which I am arrested? Is it under section 124?" asked Gandhi. "No, not under section 124. I have got a written order," said the magistrate. "Would you mind reading it to me?" requested Gandhi. The magistrate read it out. The arrest was under Regulation xxv of 1827. It was nearing one.

Gandhi packed up his few necessities and handed over papers to a volunteer. "Please give me a few minutes more for prayer," he said. This was granted. He asked Pandit Khare, one of the satyagrahis, to recite his favourite *Vaishnavajan* hymn, with which he had begun his march. Gandhi stood up, his eyes closed, his head bent, while the hymn was sung. All of the party then bowed before him one by one, and bade an affectionate farewell. A police constable took charge of his two khadi satchels and a small bundle of clothes. At ten past one, they put him in the lorry on the way to Yeravda Central Jail. "At the dead of night, like thieves they came to steal him away," observed Mirabehn. "For, 'when they sought to lay hand on him, they feared the multitudes, because they took him for a prophet!' "

Storm Over The Land

1930–1931

GANDHI's arrest led to hartals and strikes all over India. Some fifty-thousand textile workers downed tools in Bombay. Railway workers too joined the demonstration. There was a mammoth procession impressive enough to induce the police to retire from the scene. The cloth merchants decided on a six-day hartal. In Poona, where Gandhi was interned, resignations from honorary offices and from services were announced at frequent intervals. In Calcutta, police opened fire at the slightest provocation and arrested many people. There was firing also in Delhi. On the day of Gandhi's arrest, Peshawar was surrounded by military, and the Congress leaders were removed by the police. India rose like one man.

There were sympathetic demonstrations all over the world where Indians had settled for business. The West awakened by Romain Rolland showed a keen interest in the Indian crisis. French and German papers were full of Gandhi and his doings. A hundred clergymen headed by Dr. John Haynes Holmes requested Ramsay MacDonald, the British Premier, to settle amicably with Gandhi.

The revolutionary zeal was at its zenith. In Sholapur the people held possession of the town for a week, replacing the police and establishing their own rule, until the martial law was proclaimed. There was trouble in Mymensingh, Calcutta, Karachi, Lucknow, Multan, Delhi, Rawalpindi, Mardan and Peshawar. Troops, aeroplanes, tanks, guns and ammunition were brought on the scene and freely used in the North-West Frontier Province. In June, 500 tons of bombs were dropped over the Pathans but their spirit remained uncrushed. The number of Red Shirts increased from a couple of hundreds to 80,000. Repression in the Punjab gave birth to the Ahrar Party, a spirited Muslim organization.

Gandhi's successor, Abbas Tyabji, ex-Justice of Baroda, who was getting ready for the march, at Karadi, received on May 11, 1930

a notice inviting him to reconsider the serious nature and consequences of the course on which he proposed to embark. The next day the volunteers fell into line ready for the march, but before they traversed a few fields Tyabji and his men were arrested.

Mrs. Naidu succeeded Tyabji. On May 21, over 2,000 volunteers led by her and Imam Saheb raided Dharasana salt depot, about 150 miles north of Bombay. Mrs. Naidu led the volunteers in prayer and addressed them briefly: "Gandhiji's body is in jail but his soul is with you. India's prestige is in your hands. You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten but you must not resist, you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows." With Manilal Gandhi in the forefront, the throng moved forward towards the salt pans, which were now surrounded with barbed-wire stockade and ditches filled with water, guarded by four hundred Surat police with half a dozen British officials in command. The police carried lathis, five-foot clubs tipped with steel. Inside the stockade twenty-five riflemen stood ready.

A hundred yards from the stockade the satyagrahis drew up and a picked column advanced, wading the ditches and approaching the barbed wire. Police officers ordered them to disperse. The column calmly ignored the warning and slowly went forward. "Suddenly," wrote Mr. Miller, an American journalist, "at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers, and rained blows on their heads with steel-shod lathis. Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. They went down like ninepins. From where I stood I heard sickening whacks of the clubs on unprotected skulls. The waiting crowd of watchers groaned and sucked in their breaths in sympathetic pain at every blow. Those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing in pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies. Great patches of blood widened on their white clothes. The survivors without breaking the ranks silently and doggedly marched on until struck down."

So it went on. When the first column was gone another marched forward. "Although every one knew that within a few minutes he would be beaten down, perhaps killed, I could detect no signs of wavering or fear. They marched steadily with heads up, without the encouragement of music or cheering, or any possibility that they might escape serious injury or death. The police rushed out and

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methodically and mechanically beat down the second batch. There was no fight, no struggle; the marcher simply walked forward until struck down. There were no outcries, only groans after they fell. There were not enough stretcher-bearers to carry off the wounded; I saw eighteen injured being carried off simultaneously, while forty-two still lay bleeding on the ground awaiting stretcher-bearers. The blankets used as stretchers were sodden with blood."

After a while the tactics were varied, and twenty-five men would advance and sit waiting. The police beat them with their lathis. "Bodies toppled over in threes and fours, bleeding from great gashes on their scalps. Group after group walked forward, sat down, and submitted being beaten into insensibility, without raising an arm to fend off the blows. Finally, the police became enraged by the non-resistance, sharing, I suppose, the helpless rage I had felt at the demonstrators for not fighting back. They commenced savagely kicking the seated men in the abdomen and testicles. The injured men writhed and squealed in agony, which seemed to inflame the fury of the police, and the crowd again almost broke away from their leaders. The police then began dragging the sitting men by the arms or feet, sometimes for a hundred yards, and throwing them into ditches. One was dragged to a ditch where I stood; the splash of his body doused me with the muddy water. Another policeman dragged a Gandhi man to the ditch, threw him in, then belaboured him over the head with his lathi. Hour after hour stretcher-bearers carried back a stream of inert, bleeding bodies."

Mrs. Naidu and Manilal Gandhi were arrested. Vithalbhai Patel, surveying the scene, said: "All hope of reconciling India with the British Empire is lost for ever."

By eleven in the morning, at a temperature of 116 in shade, all activities slackened. Miller went to the temporary hospital where he counted 320 injured, many still insensible with fractured skulls, others writhing in agony from kicks in the testicles and stomach. Scores of the injured had received no treatment for hours and two had died. Government made every effort to prevent Miller from communicating his reports to his paper. "In eighteen years of my reporting in twenty countries, during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights and rebellions, I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharasana," remarked Miller. His story of the beatings caused a sensation when

it appeared in the 1,350 newspapers served by the United Press throughout the world.

Raids in succession were also made on the salt depot at Wadala, a suburb of Bombay. On May 18, some 470 satyagrahis who set out for the raid were arrested. Batches of ten volunteers appeared unexpectedly, raided the salt pans and then in their attempt to march out, they were arrested. Three days later another raid on the salt works was made, in which many volunteers were injured and 250 were arrested. On May 25, 100 volunteers, accompanied by 2,000 spectators, carried out a further determined raid. The police handled them mercilessly and even opened fire. There were many daring raids on Wadala, but the most demonstrative raid came off on the morning of June 1, when 15,000 volunteers and spectators participated in the great mass action. Time after time the resisters broke through the police cordons, invaded the salt pans, and carried away handfuls and sackfuls of salt. The police could not cope with the situation and the mounted police charged into the crowd with rearing horses, striking bare heads with clubs. Similar raids took place in Karnatak on the Sanikatta salt works, in which some 10,000 raiders took away thousands of maunds of salt under the shower of lathis and bullets.

George Slocombe, a British journalist, who witnessed the raid on the Wadala salt depot, obtained an interview with Gandhi in jail on May 20. "The imprisoned mahatma," he wrote, "now incarnates the very soul of India." He begged in vain that the Government should negotiate with the Congress. Gandhi was not deterred. The immense suffering which the struggle had brought with it counted for little in his mind. It was, as he saw it, a preparation for freedom of higher order. In the middle of May, in letters to the ashramites from "Yeravda Palace", Gandhi wrote: "My health is all right, I rise in the morning at the ashram hour. I am given a light, so I can read the Gita chapters according to our custom. I am gradually recovering from my exhaustion of so many days. I rest regularly at eight in the morning, and twelve noon, and thus get some two to three hours sleep during the day. . . "

He wrote a line or two to every inmate of the ashram. Addressing the children, "little birds," he wrote:

"Ordinary birds cannot fly without wings. With wings, of course, all can fly. But if you, without wings, will learn how to fly, then all

your troubles will indeed be at an end. And I will teach you. See, I have no wings, yet I come flying to you every day in thought. Look, here is little Vimala, here is Hari, and here Dharmakumar. You also can come flying to me in thought. There is no need of a teacher for those who know how to think. The teacher may guide us, but he cannot give us the power of thinking. That is latent in us. Those who are wise get wise thoughts. . ."

He wrote weekly letters in Gujarati to the inmates of the ashram, containing a cursory examination of the principal ashram vows—truth, non-violence, brahmacharya, non-possession, bread labour, etc. All these letters appeared in *Young India* and were subsequently published in book form, *From Yeravda Mandir.* His other literary activity was the translation of the hymns from the Upanishads and other Sanskrit scriptures, published later by John Hoyland in the little volume of *Songs From Prison.*

Though Gandhi was imprisoned, he was with the people in spirit. Surely he was, as he sat in his cell, translating the lines of Kabir:

> He who is valiant of heart fleeth not from the face of peril,
> And he who fleeth from peril is craven and base:
> Behold, the battle is joined,
> Fierce, fierce is the onslaught:
> Anger, passion and pride,
> Ambition, lust and desire,
> Are the foes who ride widely upon us:
> At our side fight our friends,
> Self-rule, truth, piety, peace.
> The warrior's sword is the Holy Name,
> And we brandish it wide:
> In that war
> cravens are never seen,
> But the valourous fight in the van.

Civil disobedience continued. The Government were keenly alive to the seriousness of the situation. Liberal leaders met Lord Irwin and urged that he should announce the early date of the Round Table Conference for the discussion of dominion status. They advised the Congress to withdraw civil disobedience. On May 12, in

the course of a statement the Viceroy said that steps were being taken to arrange the conference in London on or about October 20. "Neither my Government, nor His Majesty's Government will be deflected by these unhappy events from our firm determination to abide by the policy I was privileged to announce on November last."

The Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad in June and expressed its abiding faith in civil disobedience. It chalked out a programme to be followed in the coming weeks and recommended in its resolutions continuation of civil disobedience, complete boycott of all foreign cloth, inauguration of a no-tax campaign, weekly breaches of the salt law, boycott of British banking, insurance, shipping and other institutions, and the picketing of liquor shops. The committee congratulated the country for the general spirit of non-violence and courage and condemned the Government for inhuman repression. The committee took the opportunity to impress upon the Indians employed in the military and police forces that "it is as much their duty as that of other Indians to strive for the freedom of their country and expects them to treat satyagrahis and others engaged in the achievement of that freedom as their own brethren and not as enemies."

The Viceroy promulgated two drastic ordinances to counteract picketing, non-payment of taxes and tampering with the loyalty of Government servants. Before the year was out no less than a dozen ordinances were issued. As these ordinances grew and prohibitions grew, opportunities for breaking them also grew and civil resistance took the form of doing the very thing that the ordinance was intended to stop. Those were days of stirring news, processions and lathi charges and firing, frequent hartals to celebrate noted arrests, and special observances, like Peshawar Day and Garhwal Day.

On June 5 Gandhi Day was celebrated in Bombay as a mark of protest against the leader's arrest with a mile-long procession led by women and followed by Pathans, Sikhs and other martial races. Some 65,000 workers stopped work to join the celebration. Much that was remarkable happened in Bombay, inspiring other parts of India to follow it up. To face the lathi charges became a point of honour, and in a spirit of martyrdom the volunteers went out to be beaten. The demonstrators sometime spent whole night facing the police, who blocked their way and beat the crowd mercilessly.

Boycott of foreign cloth, liquor and all British goods was almost complete. Women dressed in orange khadi saris picketed shops dealing in foreign goods. Few entered these shops. If anyone attempted to enter, the woman volunteer joined her hands in suplication and she pleaded; if all else failed, she would throw herself across the threshold and dare him to walk over her body. The volunteers flung themselves even in front of a car, until its owner submitted and took back into the shop the forbidden goods. But those were exceptional shops which had refused to give the pledge to sell no foreign cloth and no British goods. Most of the Indian shops gave this undertaking, and where pickets were posted, it rarely happened that a purchaser tried to defy them. Only with a printed permit issued by the Congress committee dare a driver take his bales past the Congress sentries, who kept watch, day and night, in every lane and alley of the business quarter. Their inspectors entered every warehouse and shop, and watched every cotton press. They would even confiscate forbidden goods, which a merchant had tried to smuggle past their patrols. In Bombay alone, thirty crores' worth of foreign cloth was sealed by the Congress.

Every day began with a *prabhat pheri*. At dawn, from every street issued a procession of a khadi-clad agitation squad. Men, women and children recited songs, which extolled the leaders, called for a boycott of British goods, and proclaimed the determination to win liberty or to die.

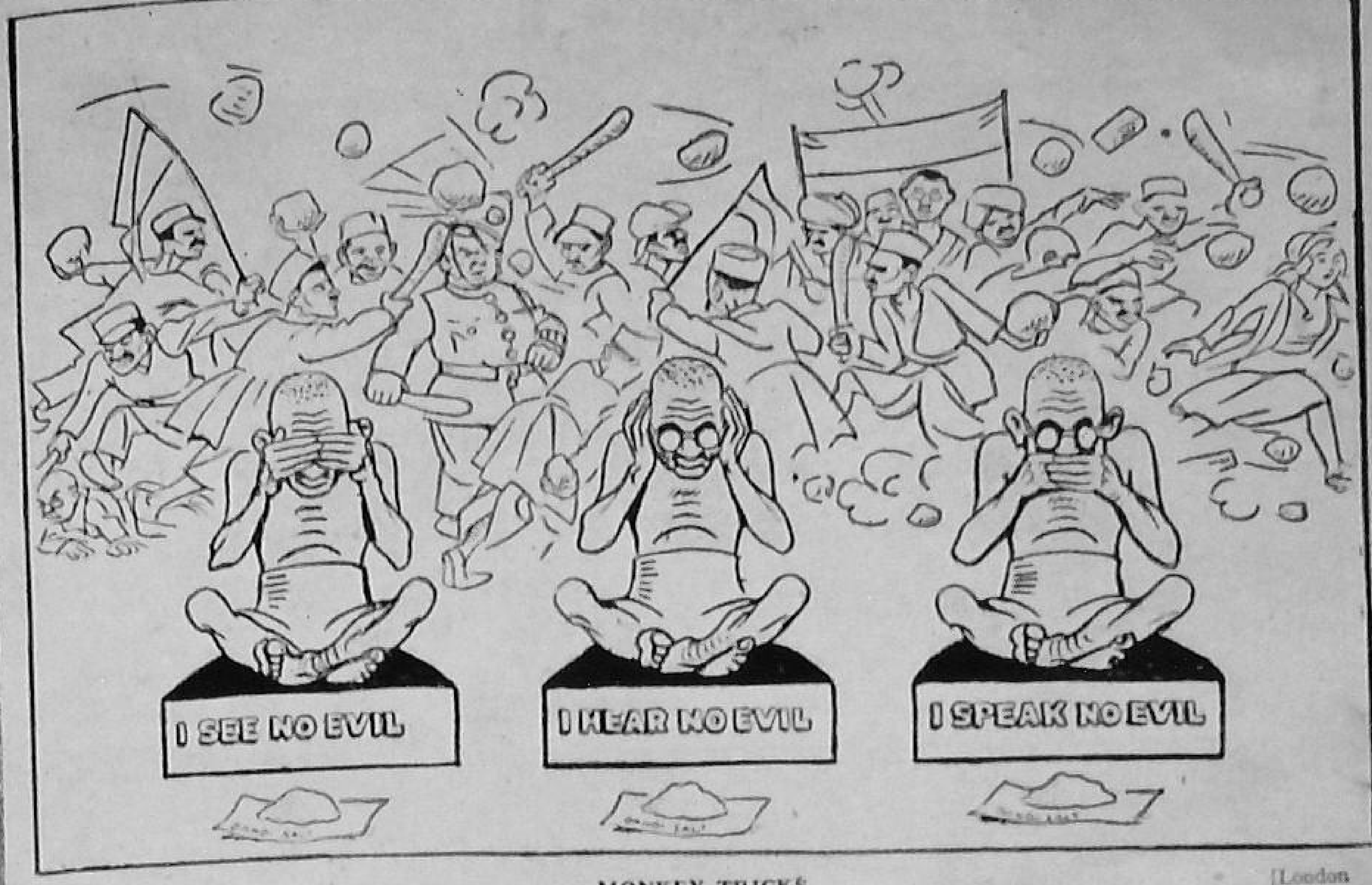
By the autumn of 1930 imports of cotton piecegoods had went down to between a third and a fourth of what they were in the same months of the previous year. Cigarettes had fallen in value to a sixth of the old figure. Sixteen British-owned mills in Bombay had been closed down. On the other hand, the Indian-owned mills which had given the pledge were working double shifts. About 113 mills signed declaration, to which they agreed, to eliminate competition of mill cloth with khadi by refraining from producing cloth below eighteen counts. So great was the rush for khadi that all stocks were depleted, though the production all over rose by 70 per cent from 63 lakhs of yards to 113 lakhs of yards. The total number of khadi stores at the end of 1930 was 600, as against 384 in 1929. The production activities of the All-India Spinners' Association covered, during the year, 6,494 villages and found employment for 1,39,969 spinners, 11,426 weavers and 1,006 carders.

The pickets went in their hundreds to prison, but always there were more to replace them. The most striking part in the campaign was played by the women, belonging to all sections of society. Even the aged Kasturbai Gandhi and Mrs. Motilal Nehru participated in picketing. Repurcussions of the movement were plain enough. "The latest news from India is likely to bring Lancashire's Indian trade to a complete standstill," wrote *Daily Mail.* Due to successful picketing, the revenue fell by about seventy per cent. The forest laws in C.P. were defied, the Government losing thereby some sixteen lakhs of rupees.

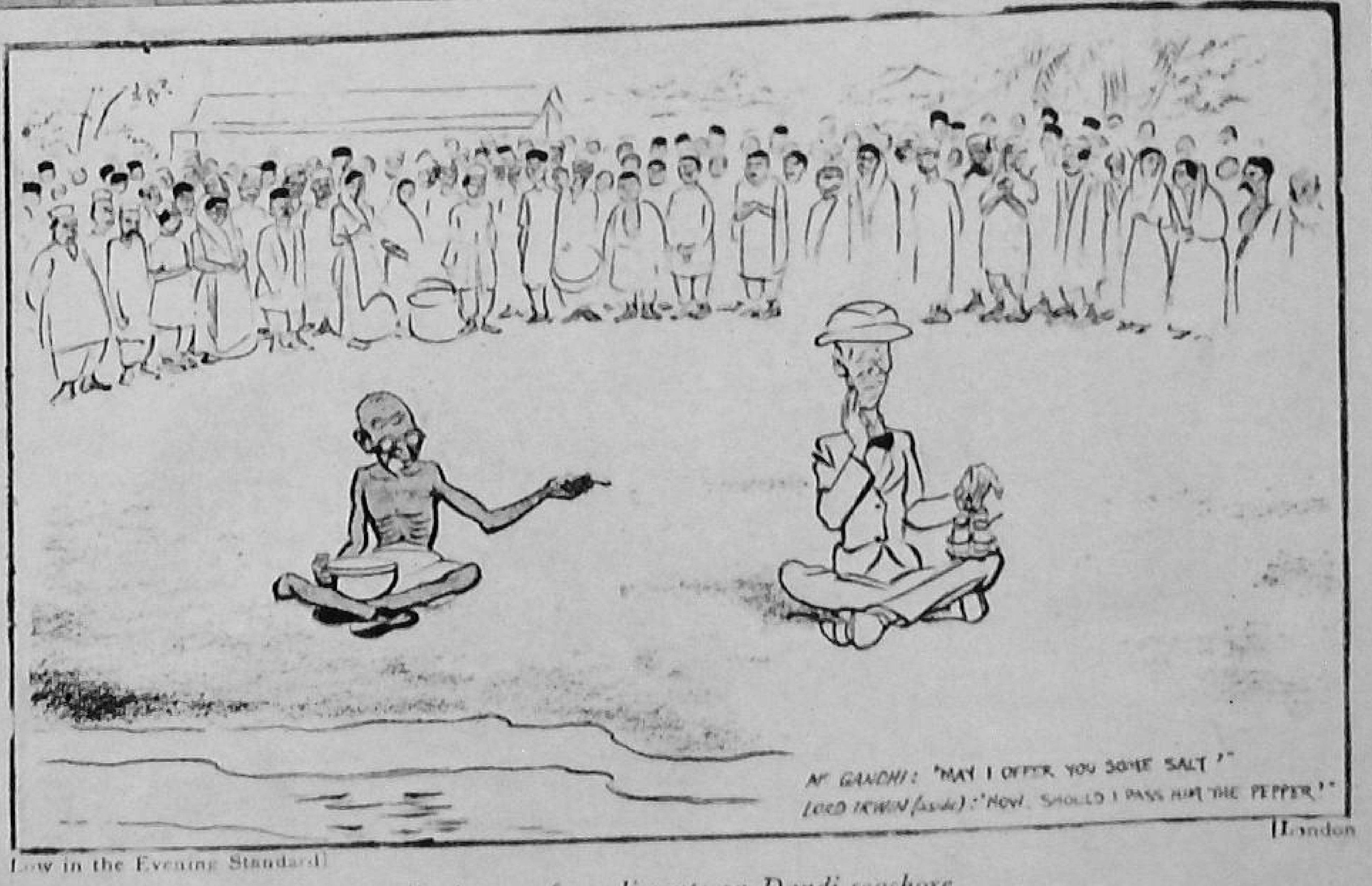
On June 30 the Government arrested Motilal Nehru, the acting president, and declared the Working Committee of the Congress as an unlawful association. Thousands of people were jailed. Criminals were released to make room for political prisoners, but even so the jails were overcrowded and many were herded into barbed-wire enclosures. The government by ordinances went on apace. By July, sixty-seven nationalist newspapers and fifty-five printing-presses had been shut down under the Press Ordinance. The Navajivan Press was seized and *Young India* began to appear in cyclostyle.

In late June the long-awaited report of the statutory commission was issued. Its recommendations did not even go so far as to repeat the Viceroy's vague promise of dominion status. They provided for a strengthening of the central authority, while giving a few concessions to the provinces. The principle of "divide and rule" was carried further by the Simon Commission, by its extension of the principle of communal electorates. It sought to make the imperial power still more impregnable in the central government by drawing in the princes. But the most significant part of the report was its attitude with regard to the army. It said that for a very long time to come, it would be impossible for the army "to dispense with a very considerable British element", and it also proposed to put it directly under the control of the imperial authority, represented by the Governor-General acting with the Commander-in-Chief. The excuse for it was that the effective defence of India vitally affected "imperial foreign policy, empire communications, empire trade, general position of Britain in the East", and other references were made to "grave possibilities of internal disturbance".

These recommendations profoundly disappointed all the political parties. People like Malaviya and Aney threw in their lot with the



Daily Express] MONKEY TRICKS. [London



Low in the Evening Standard] [London

Exchange of condiments on Dandi seashore

Gandhi's cartoons published in the foreign press during 1930-1931

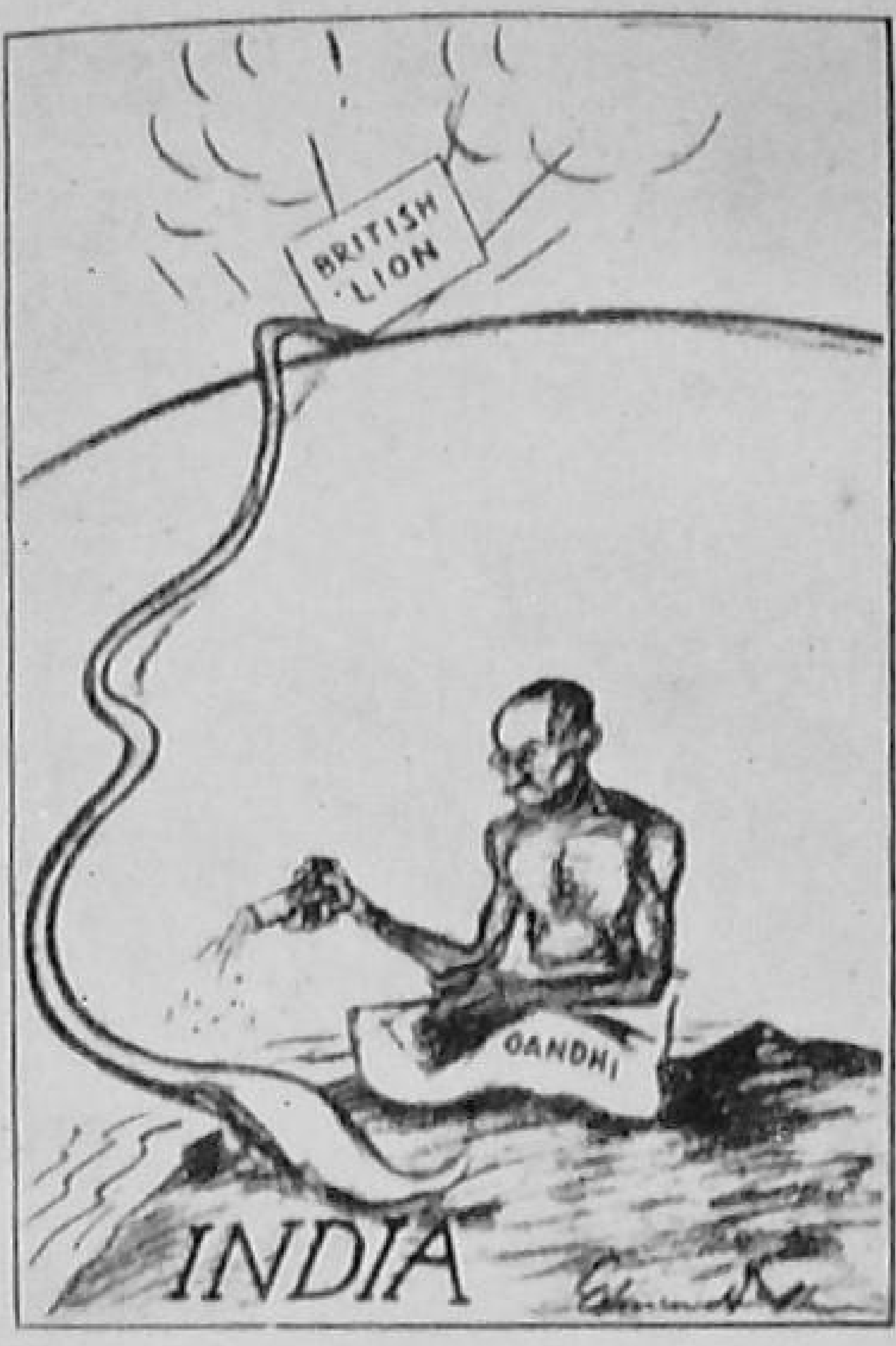
Low in the Evening Standard] [Lor

BETWEEN GANDHI AND WINDHI.

Daily Express] [London

THE RUSSIAN PROPAGANDHI.

"Salt is no good, comrade. Try a bombski!"



Sun] [Baltimore

Putting salt on his tail.

Post-Dispatch] [St. Louis

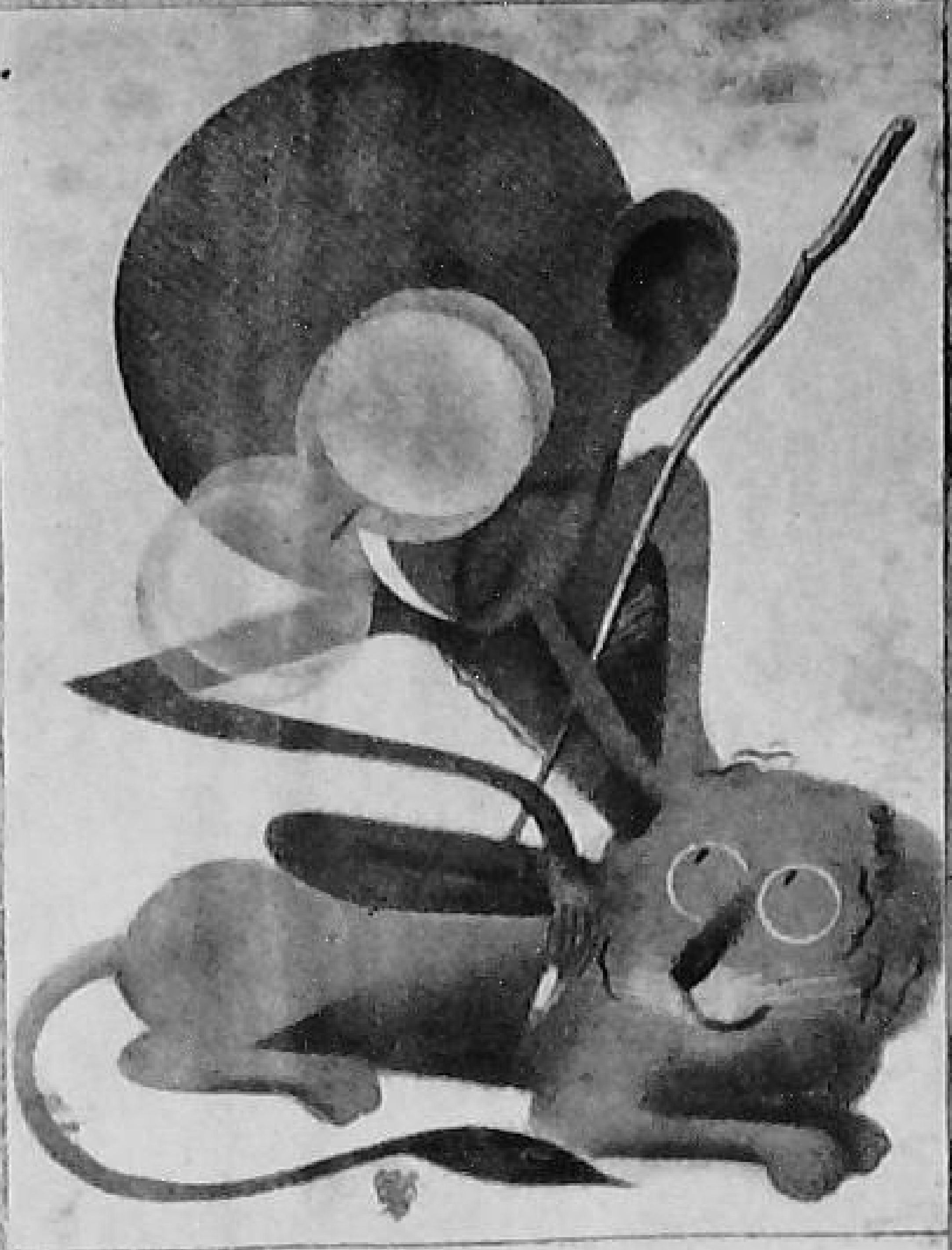
THE SHOP THAT WAS HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD.

Simplicissimus] [Munich

Hitting England in the fatal spot—where the cotton is.

Guerin Meschino] [Milan

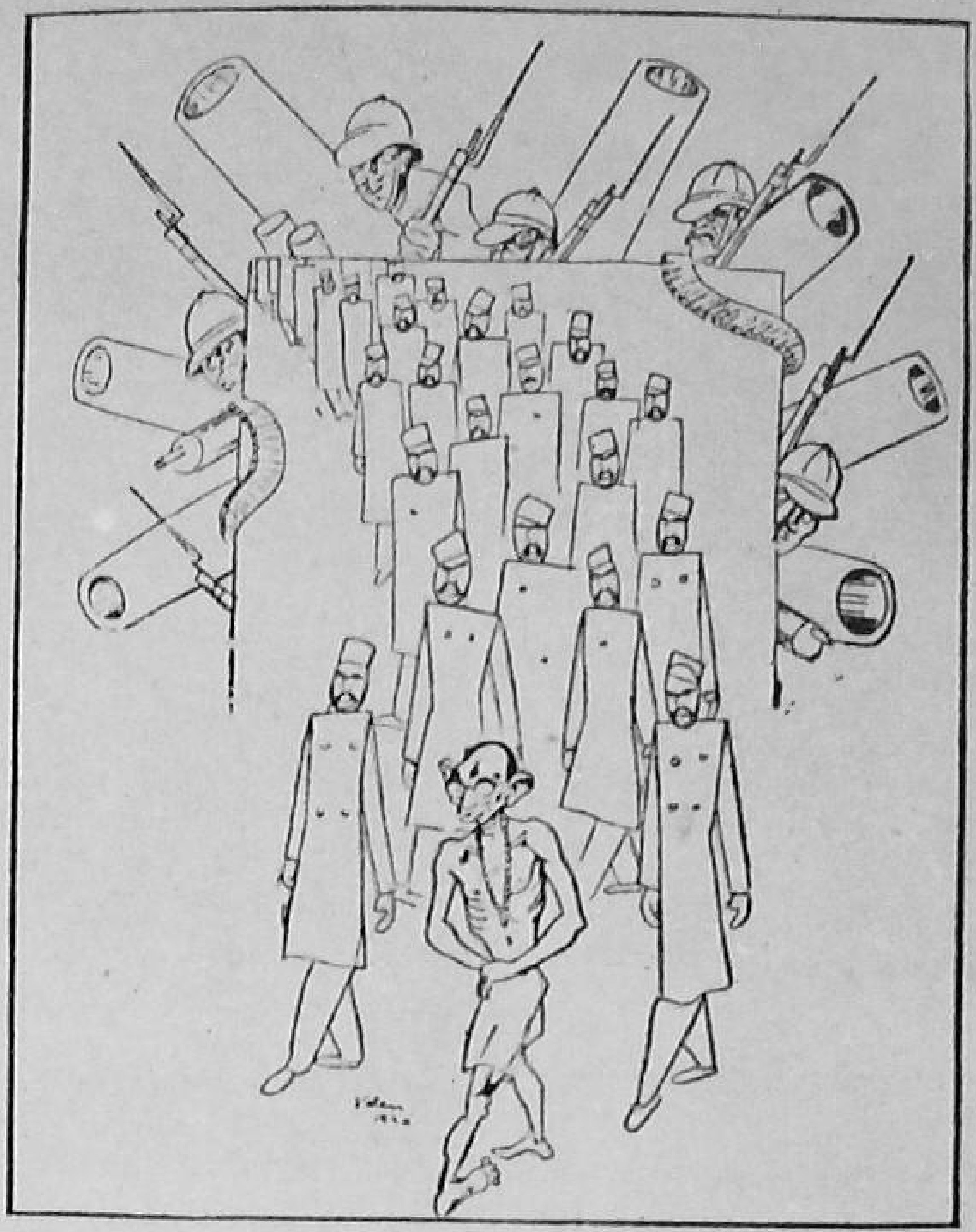
Gandhi's little game



GANDHI THE TAIL-SALTER.

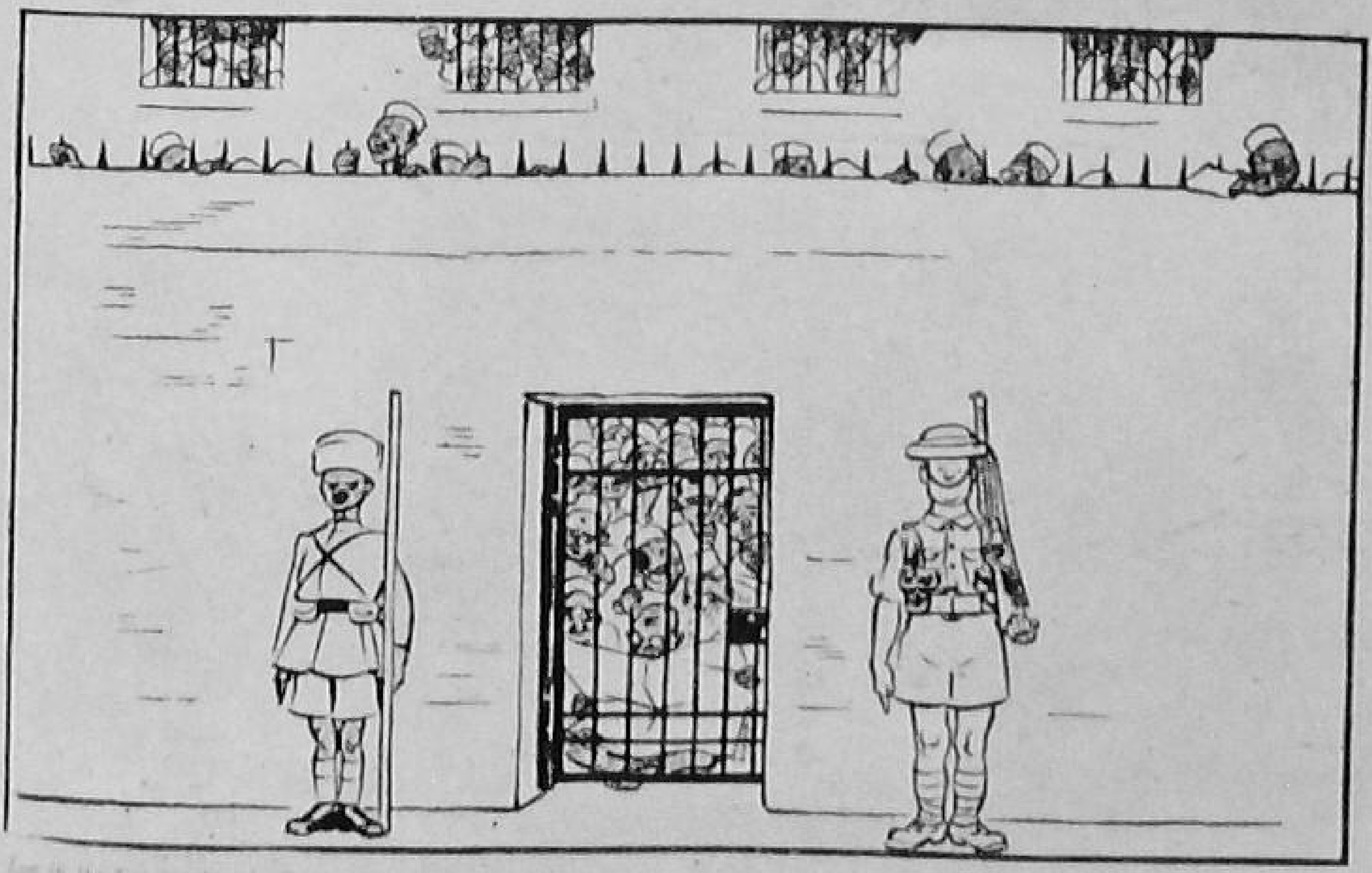
Gandhi's recent law-breaking activities in India, symbolised in the making of illegal salt by him and a multitude of followers before his arrest, have prompted this very extraordinary cartoon (in the London Graphic) of Gandhi and the British Lion, by the well-known Italian caricaturist Garretto.

THE BRITISH LION SHOWS HIS TEETH



Prager Presse] [Prague

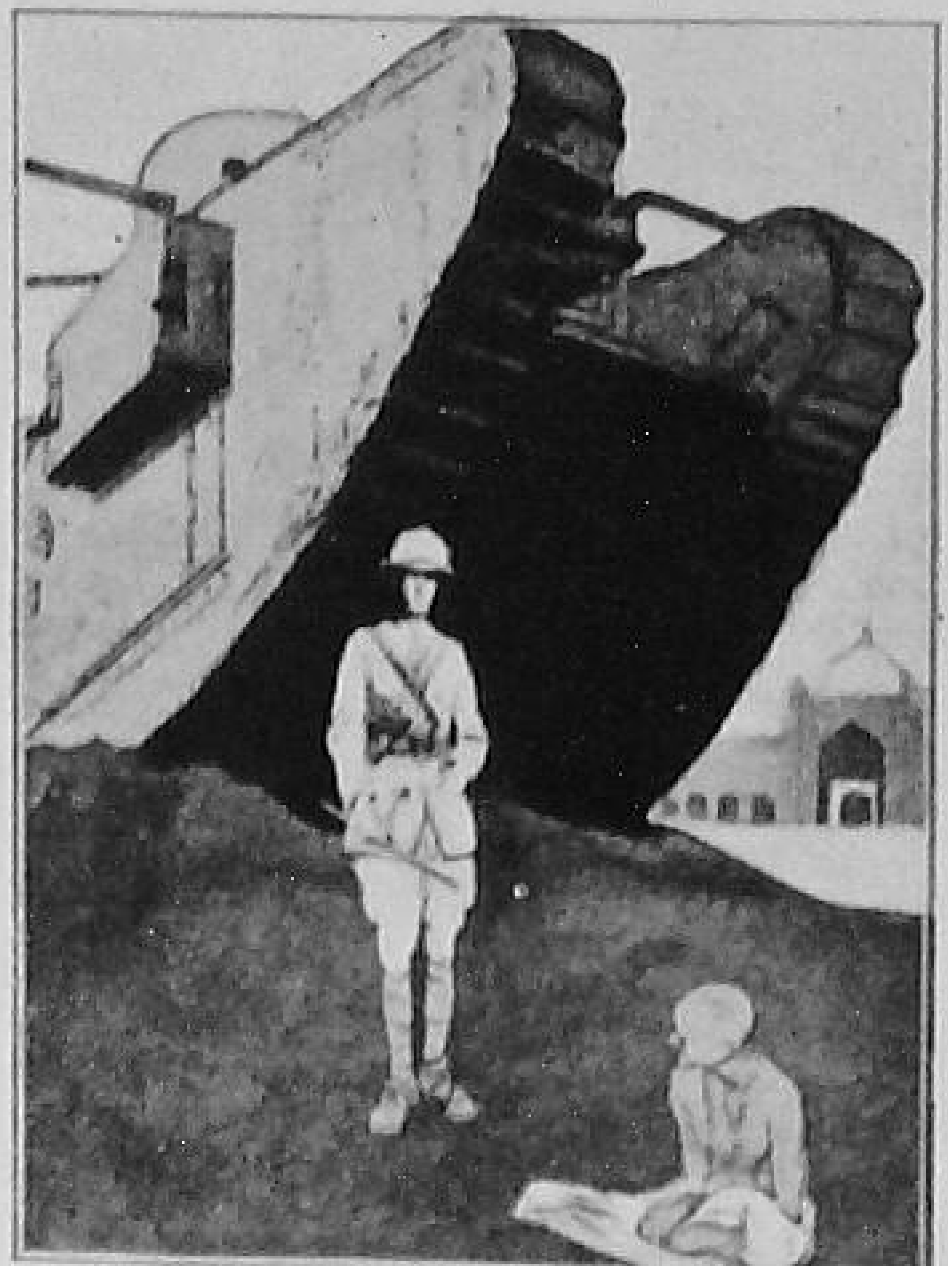
GANDHI GOES TO "WAR."



Low in the Evening Standard] [London

"What people in India want to-day is to know where they are" . . . (said Lord Lothian)

THE "FREEDOM" OF INDIA.



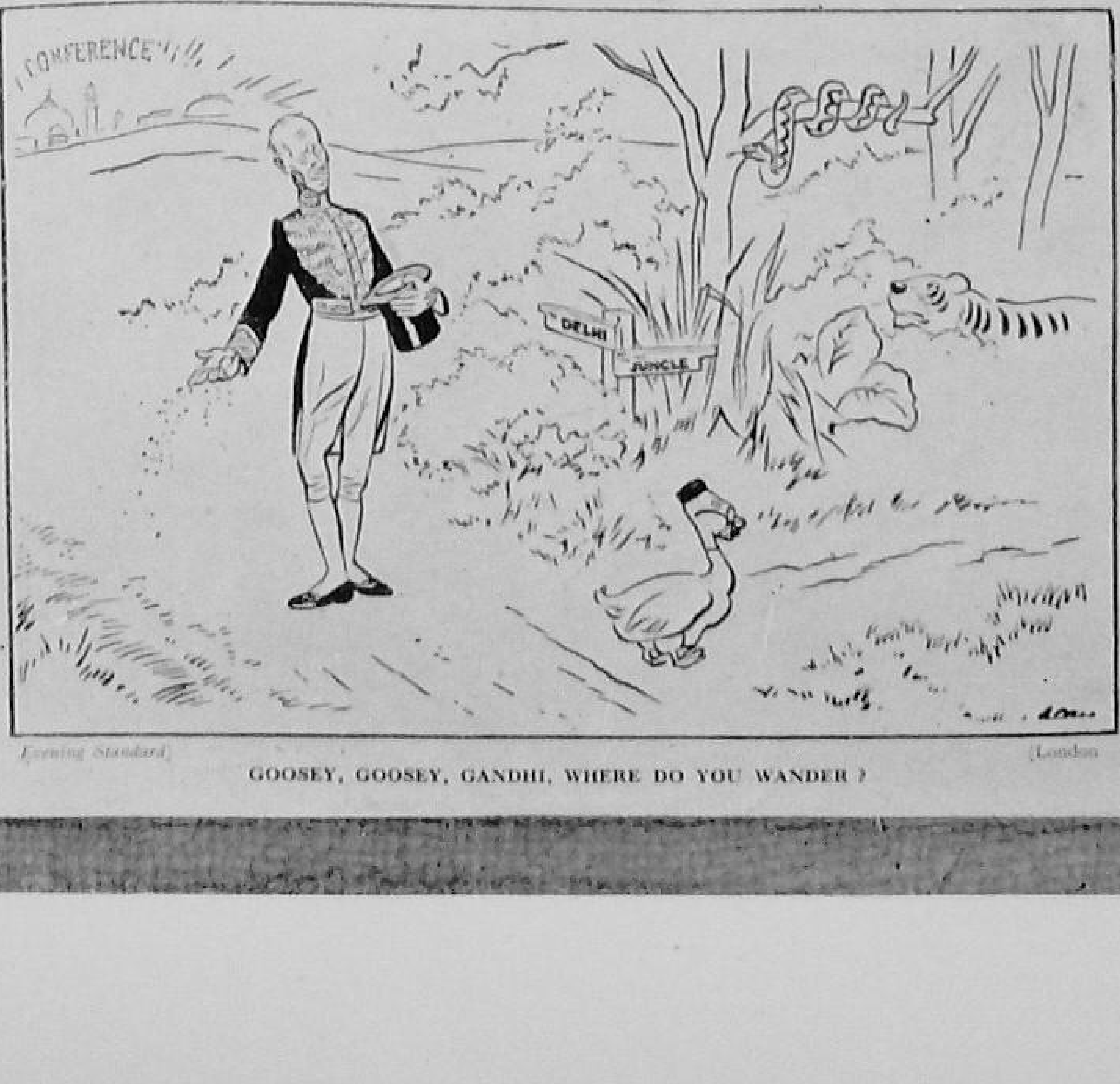
Munich

INDIA.

"Our weapons are different, Mr. Gandhi, but one of us must finally win."

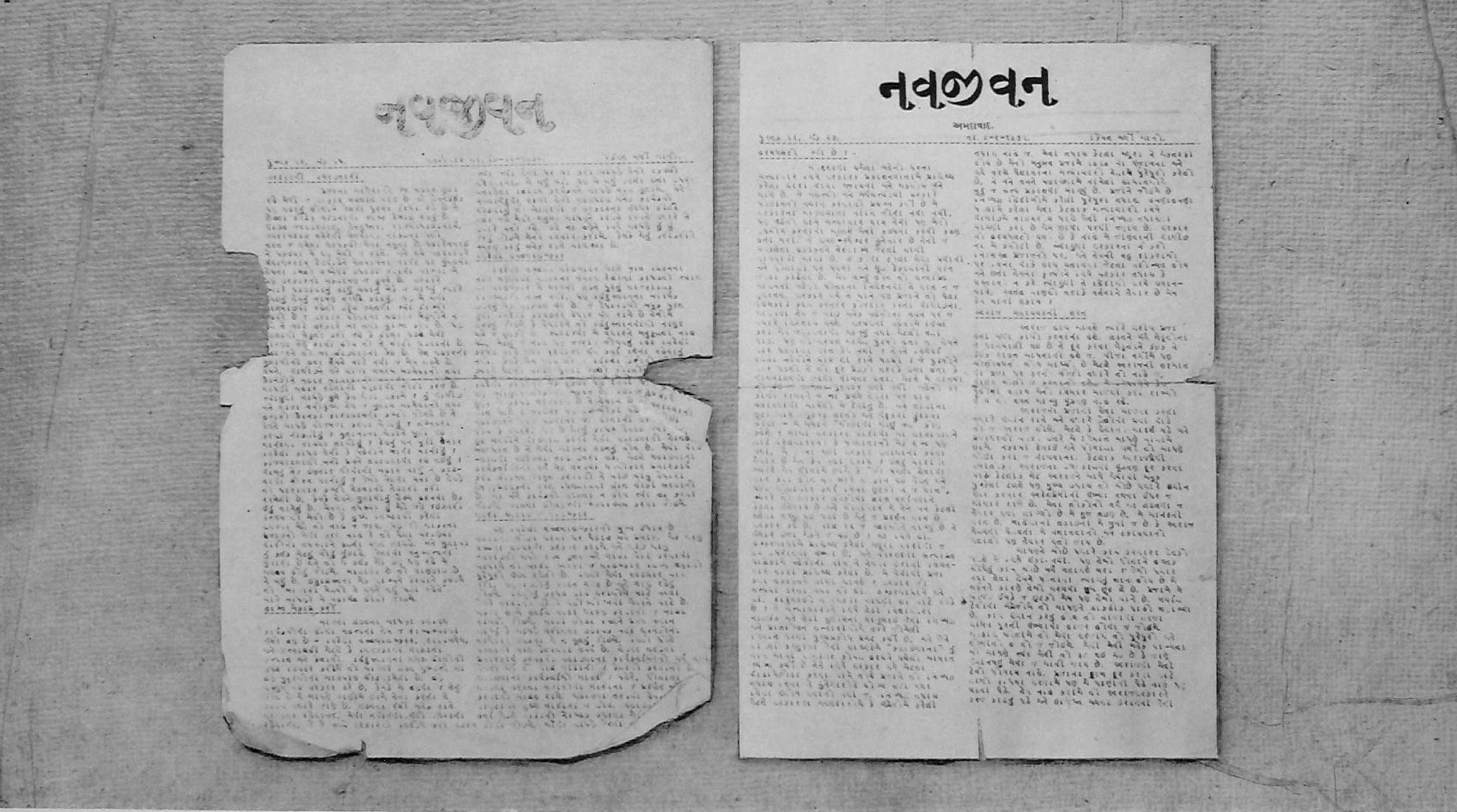
] Reynolds in the Morning Post] [London

SEATS OF THE MIGHTY.



Evening Standard] [London

GOOSEY, GOOSEY, GANDHI, WHERE DO YOU WANDER ?



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

In reply to the press ordinance regarding salt satyagraha, Gandhi's Navajivan and allied weeklies appeared in cyclostyle from July 1930 to March 1931

Congress and courted jail. The intensity of the movement exceeded every calculation of the Government. By July 6, *Observer* reported "defeatism" and "demoralization of Europeans" in India. *Statesman* commented: "Everybody admits the gravity of the situation, and all classes of traders are seriously affected by the situation."

On July 9 the Viceroy addressed a joint session of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. "It is the belief of His Majesty's Government," he said, "that by way of the conference it should be possible to reach solutions that both countries and, all parties and interests in them can honourably accept and any such agreement at which the conference is able to arrive, will form the basis of the proposals which His Majesty's Government will later submit to the Parliament." He also assured that the declaration of the pledge of dominion status as the goal stood as before. Within a week of the Viceregal announcement, a conference of over forty members of the Nationalist and Independent Parties in the Assembly and a few members of the Council of State unanimously passed a resolution authorizing M. R. Jayakar to negotiate for a settlement between the Congress and the Government. The Viceroy agreed to both Sapru and Jayakar seeing Gandhi, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal in jail with a view to persuading them to restore peace.

The peace intermediaries had long conversations with Gandhi in Yeravda jail on July 23 and the following day. Gandhi gave a note and a letter to be handed over to the Nehrus in Naini jail. The note, among other things, urged: "That the conference be restricted to a discussion of the safeguards that may be necessary in connection with the self-government during the period of transition; secondly, simultaneous calling off of civil disobedience and release of satyagraha and political prisoners." Further Gandhi said that he would reserve to himself "the liberty of testing every swaraj scheme by its ability to satisfy the object underlying the eleven points mentioned in my letter to the Viceroy".

His letter to Motilal Nehru stated that "Jawaharlal's must be the final voice", and that Gandhi "should have no hesitation in supporting any stronger position up to the letter of the Lahore resolution." In the covering letter he pleaded his inability to give a decided opinion, "being temperamentally so built."

Sapru and Jayakar interviewed the Nehrus in Naini prison, on July 27. The conversations lasted for two days and they refused to

make any suggestions without first consulting the colleagues of the Congress Working Committee, especially Gandhi. They were not satisfied with Gandhi's first condition about the conference. And they wrote something to this effect to him.

Gandhi wrote his revised terms which he delivered to Jayakar on the 1st August, declaring that no constitutional scheme would be acceptable to him which did not contain a clause allowing India the right to secede from the empire at her desire and another clause which gave the right and power to India to deal satisfactorily with his eleven points. He made it clear that he would also insist at the conference on a clause giving India the right to have examined by an independent tribunal all the British claims and concessions given to the British interests in the past.

The Nehrus were brought to Yeravda jail and the joint interview took place on the 13th, 14th and 15th of August, between Jayakar and Sapru on the one side, and the Congress leaders on the other. The result was a letter signed by Gandhi and the Nehrus, in the course of which they said among other things:

"The language used by the Viceroy in the reply given to your letter about the conference is too vague to enable us to assess its value nor are we in a position to say anything authoritative without reference to a properly constituted meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress and, if necessary, the A.-I.C.C.; but for us individually no solution will be satisfactory unless (*a*) it recognizes, in as many words, India's right to secede at will from the British Empire; (*b*) it gives to India complete national government responsible to her people, including the control of the defence forces and economic control, and covers all the eleven points raised in Gandhiji's letter to the Viceroy; (*c*) it gives to India the right to refer to an independent tribunal such British claims, concessions and the like, including the so-called public debt of India, as may seem to the national government to be unjust or not in the interest of the people of India. Such adjustments as may be necessitated in the interests of India during the transference of power to be determined by India's chosen representatives."

The negotiators interviewed the Viceroy, who stated: "I do not think any useful purpose would be served by my attempting to deal in detail with the suggestions they made, and I must frankly say, I regard the discussion on the basis of the proposals contained

in the letter as impossible." The die-hards were much pleased. "The Government of India," said Churchill, "had imprisoned Mr. Gandhi and they had been sitting outside his cell door begging him to help them out of their difficulties."

Meanwhile repression was going on merrily. Important Congress leaders were being arrested, the Congress committees all over India were being declared as illegal organizations and their meetings were banned and their property confiscated. These measures drove the Congress underground. It no longer dominated the streets as ostentatiously as before, but its activities were felt. Its bulletins were still printed secretly and distributed openly. Surprise street-corner meetings were held by beat of a *thali* or writing on streets. In cities like Bombay, there were two governments. A few loyalists obeyed the Government while the majority had transferred its allegiance to the Congress. Its lightest nod was obeyed. And when it proclaimed a hartal, which it did every week, by way of protest against some act of the bureaucracy, silence descended upon the streets.

An important feature of the civil disobedience programme was a no-tax campaign. Sardar Patel who had been released once more led Bardoli. Repressive measures by the authorities became so intolerable that finally almost the whole population migrated from the British territory to the villages in the neighbouring state of Baroda. Mr. Brailsford visited one of the places where 80,000 were encamped in temporary shelters. "They are crowded together with their beloved cattle, and packed in the narrow space are all their household goods, the great jars in which they store their rice, clothes and churns, chests and beds, shining pots of brass, here a plough, there a picture of the gods, and everywhere, at intervals, the presiding genius of this camp, a picture of Mahatma Gandhi. I asked a big group of them why they had left their homes. The women gave the promptest and simple answer: 'Because Mahatmaji is in prison.' The men were conscious of an economic grievance: 'Farming does not pay and the tax is unjust.' One or two said, 'To win swaraj'." Brailsford reported terrorism by the Government. "One village was haunted every night by a gang of ruffians, who fired guns, tore veils, and on one occasion murdered a peasant with an axe," and more tales of the same kind. The no-tax campaign had a considerable success in Gujarat. It soon spread to the United Provinces and several other areas.

The Europeans in India clamoured for still firmer measures. But Lord Irwin realizing the futility of repression said at the Calcutta Association in December: "However emphatically we may condemn the civil disobedience movement, we should, I am satisfied, make a profound mistake, if we underestimate the genuine and powerful meaning of nationalism that is today animating much of Indian thought and for this no complete or permanent cure had ever been or ever will be found in strong action by the Government."

Meanwhile the British Government had decided to go on with the Round Table Conference, regardless of the Congress attitude. The first R.T.C. met in the shadow of civil resistance and repression in India. For the first time in the history of British connection with India, the King of England presided over the conference, opened on November 12, 1930. Its members, nominated by the Governor-General in Council, consisted of Indian princes and various landlords, big capitalists, communalists and a few liberals. Prominent among those present were Sapru, Jayakar, Sastri, Jinnah, the Ali brothers, Dr. Ambedkar and Dr. Moonje.

For nearly ten weeks, the various committees met to discuss a constitution on the lines suggested by the statutory commission. The conference could only advise the British Government, beyond that it had no voice. The strength of the Congress and its title to speak for a vast majority of the Indian people was stated and endorsed by speaker after speaker at the R.T.C. The members of the Simon Commission had taken no part in the conference. Churchill leading a powerful section of the Conservative Party favoured the Simon Report, and bitterly denounced the "painful difference" between the Viceroy and the Government of India, on the one hand, and the statutory commission, on the other. There was a tense political battle over the recommendations of the Round Table Conference, Churchill saying that the Conservative Party could not be bound to them, and Baldwin pledging the party to honour the undertakings and trying to make the most of the "safeguards" which remained undefined, and which would determine the measure of control to remain in British hands. Ramsay MacDonald had pledged Britain in the following vague terms:

"The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon the legislatures, central and provincial, with such provision as may be necessary to

guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by the minorities to protect their political liberties and rights. In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be the primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own Government."

The conference ended by January 1931, but its work was not yet over. "His Majesty's Government, in view of the character of the conference and of the limited time at its disposal in London, has deemed it advisable to suspend its work at this point so that the Indian opinion may be consulted upon the work done and the expedients considered for overcoming the difficulties which have been raised." MacDonald stated that the Government as well as representatives of other parliamentary parties in England would soon confer with Lord Willingdon, who was to succeed Lord Irwin as Viceroy, as to the details of the plan by which this may be done, so that "the results of our completed work may be seen in a new Indian constitution." The Premier added: "If in the meantime, there is response to the Viceroy's appeal from those engaged at present in civil disobedience, and there is a wish to co-operate on the general lines of this declaration, steps will be taken to enlist their services."

The conference made no difference to the course of mass civil disobedience campaign. The great sacrifices and hardships of the people touched the sympathetic chord of every Indian. Mahomed Ali pleaded that King George V, remembering how his ancestor lost the American colonies, should act with special understanding, sympathy and generosity now, in order to save the Indo-British connection. He passed away in London on January 4, 1931. In the early hours of the fateful day, he was revising his last appeal to the Hindus and Muslims to bury their differences and work for Indian nationalism.

On January 17, Lord Irwin, reviewing the events of the past year, characterized the civil disobedience as a grave menace to the Government but added: "However mistaken any man think him to be, and however deplorable may appear the results of the policy

associated with his name, no one can fail to recognize the spiritual force which impels Gandhi to count that no sacrifice is too great in the cause, as he believes, of India that he loves, and I fancy that, though he on his side too, thinks those who differ from him to be victims of a false philosophy, Gandhi would not be unwilling to say that men of my race, who are responsible for the Government in India, were sincere in their attempt to serve her."

On January 25, Lord Irwin issued a statement releasing Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee without any delay. The legal bar against their meeting and the notifications declaring the committee unlawful were all withdrawn at once, and then the Viceroy added:

"My Government will impose no conditions on these releases, for we feel that the best hope of restoration of peaceful conditions lies in discussions being conducted by those concerned, under the terms of unconditional liberty.

"Our action has been taken in pursuance of a sincere desire to assist the creation of such peaceable conditions as would enable the Government to implement the undertaking given by the Prime Minister that if civil quiet were proclaimed and assured, Government would not be backward in response.

"I am content to trust those who will be affected by our decision to act in the same spirit as inspires it, and I am confident that they will recognize the importance of securing for those grave issues calm and dispassionate examination."

Gandhi was released on the morrow of this declaration. Interviewed on his release, he stated: "I have come out of jail with an absolutely open mind, unfettered by enmity, unbiased in argument and prepared to study the situation from every point of view and discuss the Premier's statement with Tej Bahadur Sapru and other delegates on their return. I make this statement in deference to the urgent wish expressed in a cable sent to me from London by some of the delegates."

Speaking to the journalists in Bombay, Gandhi further clarified his position: "I personally feel that the mere release of members of the Congress Working Committee makes a difficult situation, infinitely more difficult, and makes any action on the part of the members almost, if not altogether, impossible. The authorities have evidently not perceived that the movement has so much affected

the mass mind that leaders, however prominent, will be utterly unable to dictate to them a particular course of action."

He then went on to insist on the right of picketing and the manufacture of salt:

"What I am anxious to clear is that even if after consultation with friends who are coming from the R. T. C., it is found that the Premier's statement affords sufficient ground for the Congress to tender co-operation, the right of picketing cannot be given up nor the right of the starving millions to manufacture salt.

"If these elementary rights are recognized, most of the ordinances will naturally have to be withdrawn. It is, therefore, necessary for the public, also the Government, to understand the fundamental position of the Congress. The manufacture of salt and the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor are not intended to register the resistance of the nation to the existing misrule, but intended to achieve these ends for all time.

"No amount of goodwill, especially between Great Britain and India, so far as I can see, will reconcile the public to the drink evil, foreign cloth evil or prohibition of the manufacture of salt.

"Speaking for myself, I am hankering after peace, if it can be had with honour, but even if I stood alone, I can be no party to any peace which does not satisfactorily solve the three questions I have mentioned. I should judge the Round Table Conference tree by its fruit.

"I have given three tests that are in operation, but as the public know, there are eight more points I want. The substance of independence, not the shadow, and even as doctor names the disease after proper diagnosis, so I will name the tree of the Round Table Conference after I have examined the fruit in the light of the eleven points which are conceived in the terms of the man in the street."

January 26, 1931, the first anniversary of Independence Day, was celebrated with great gusto. Release of Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee on that day added much to the enthusiasm of the people. The momentous day was observed all over the country by the holding of mass meetings which confirmed the resolution of independence, and passed an identical resolution called the Resolution of Remembrance:

"We, the citizens of...record our proud and grateful appreciation of the sons and daughters of India who have taken part in the

struggle for independence and have suffered and sacrificed so that the motherland may be free; of our great, beloved leader Mahatma Gandhi, who has been a constant inspiration for us, ever pointing to the path of high purpose and noble endeavour; of the hundreds of our brave youths who have laid down their lives at the altar of freedom; of the martyrs of Peshawar and the Frontier Province, Sholapur, Midnapur and Bombay; of the scores of thousands who have faced and suffered barbarous lathi attacks from the forces of the enemy; of the men of the Garhwali Regiment, and other Indians in the military and police ranks of the Government, who have refused, at the peril of their own lives, to fire or take other action against their own countrymen; of the indomitable peasantry of Gujarat, which has faced without flinching and turning back all acts of terrorism, and the brave and long-suffering peasantry of the other parts of India, which has taken part in the struggle despite every effort to suppress it; of the merchants and other members of the commercial community, who have helped, at great loss to themselves, in the national struggle and especially in the boycotts of all foreign cloth and British goods; of the one hundred thousand men and women who have gone to prisons and suffered all manner of privations and sometimes assaults and beatings even inside of jail walls; and especially of the ordinary volunteer who, like a true soldier of India, without care of fame or reward, thinking only of the great cause he served, has laboured unceasingly and peacefully through suffering and hardship.

"We record our homage and deep admiration for the womanhood of India, who, in the hour of peril for the motherland forsook shelter of their homes and, with unfailing courage and endurance, stood shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk in the front line of our national army, to share with them the sacrifices and triumphs of the struggle; and our pride at the youth of the country and the Vanar Sena, whom even their tender age could not prevent from participating in the struggle.

"And further, we record our grateful appreciation of the fact that all the major and minor communities and classes in India have joined together in the great struggle and given of their best to the cause, of, particularly, the minority communities—the Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and others who, by their valour and loyal devotion to the cause of the common motherland, have helped in

building up a united and indissoluble nation certain of victory, and resolved to achieve and maintain the independence of India, and to use this new freedom to raise the shackles from and to remove the inequalities among, all classes of the people of India, and thus also to serve the larger cause of humanity. And with this splendid and inspiring example of sacrifice and suffering in India's cause before us, we repeat our Pledge of Independence, and resolve to carry on the fight till India is completely free."

Truce

1931

Gandhi celebrated Independence Day in Bombay and hurried to Allahabad to meet Motilal Nehru, who was taken seriously ill. It was late at night when he arrived, but Motilal was lying awake, waiting for him. "We shall surely win swaraj," Gandhi said, "if you survive this crisis." He said: "I am going soon, Mahatmaji, and I shall not be here to see swaraj. But I know you have won it and will soon have it." One after another the Congress leaders arrived, assembling for a crucial meeting of the Working Committee, and to pay their homage to the dying man.

On February 6, 1931 Motilal Nehru died in Lucknow, where he had been taken for treatment. His body, wrapped in national flag, was brought back to Allahabad. Gandhi addressed a few words to the vast multitude that had gathered to pay their last tribute to the departed leader. "The pyre is being dedicated at the altar of the nation," he said. He referred to the passing away of Tilak, Das, Lajpat Rai, Ajmal Khan and Mahomed Ali, and said that "it was no time for grief but for joy." If they really believed that it was a national *yajna,* then they should leave the place after taking the vow of swaraj, ahimsa and truth.

In a press statement, Gandhi said: "My position is worse than a widow's. By a faithful life, she can appropriate the merits of her husband. I can appropriate nothing. What I have lost through the death of Motilalji is a loss for ever: 'Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.' "

The political situation gave Gandhi no respite for grief. "Despite the official peace offer from Great Britain, unprovoked assaults on innocent persons still continue," he complained. "Respectable persons are summarily and without apparent reason deprived of their immovable and movable property by mere executive action. A procession of women was forcibly dispersed. They were seized by the

hair and kicked with boots. The continuance of such repression will make the Congress co-operation impossible, even if other difficulties were got over."

He told the press: "I do not see how it is possible to conduct negotiations for peace with repression fouling the atmosphere hour after hour. A mass movement like the one now going on cannot be suddenly and without reasonable hope of final settlement stopped nor can it be called off unless there is a hope of settlement shared by the vast mass of people, and this can never happen so long as repression in its virulent form continues." In another statement he said: "I shall leave no stone unturned to attain peace. It is no joy to me to submit thousands who have a childlike faith in me to suffering." Instructions were issued that, while the movement must go on, no new campaigns be organized or new situation developed. The decisions of the Working Committee were suspended, pending the arrival of Sapru, Jayakar and Sastri.

The Liberals who landed in Bombay, in February, hastened to declare, along with other delegates, that the attainment by India of dominion status was no longer in dispute. When Sastri, Sapru and Jayakar arrived in Allahabad, they had nothing fresh to tell Gandhi, despite their cable. Their discussions lasted from the 8th to 14th of February and Gandhi undertook to negotiate with Lord Irwin at the Working Committee's instance.

Gandhi sent a long letter to the Viceroy seeking an interview with him, to discuss the political situation. He particularly urged Lord Irwin to appoint an inquiry committee to go into the police excesses, in order to find out whether there was really a change of heart on the part of the Government. Lord Irwin having agreed to the interview, Gandhi left for Delhi on February 16. In the meantime the Viceroy was in frequent consultation with Sastri, Sapru and Jayakar, who were the intermediaries.

On February 17, the Gandhi-Irwin talks commenced at half past two in the noon, and continued till six. Gandhi's six demands, which were the absolute minimum for peace negotiations to begin, were: general amnesty, immediate cessation of repression, restitution of all confiscated property, reinstatement of all Government servants punished on political grounds, liberty to manufacture salt and picket liquor and foreign cloth shops, and inquiry into the excesses committed by the police.

The next day the interview continued, but it was shorter. Then both agreed to suspend the talks for sometime so that the Viceroy might consult the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, and Gandhi, the Working Committee members. In the meantime repression went on, so also civil disobedience, although it had toned down. This was more than Churchill could tolerate. "It is alarming and also nauseating," he commented, "to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor."

On February 19, Gandhi was suddenly called to the Viceroy's House and had half an hour's talk with Lord Irwin. Then he came back to Dr. Ansari's house and held consultations with Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel, Azad and other Working Committee members. A communique stated: "His Excellency the Viceroy granted a further interview to Mr. Gandhi today. It is understood that various matters emerging from the discussions are now under examination and it is possible that some days may elapse before a further stage of discussions is reached." The following day, at a prayer meeting attended by over a lakh of people, Gandhi said: "I may say this much that these talks have been conducted in a friendly manner and with much sweetness. What will be the result I cannot say. The result is in the hands of God. His will that will prevail."

Delhi attracted in those days all manner of people. There were foreign journalists, especially Americans, to report the momentous talks. Such people who had kept far from the Congress hastened to make amends. A stream of people came to Dr. Ansari's house, where Gandhi and most of the Working Committee members were staying. Even the rabid communalists were stirred by events. Gandhi's stock stood high and he was invited by Sir Mahomed Shafi to address the Council of the All-India Muslim League on February 22. Mr. Mahomed Yakub remarked that "the coming of Gandhiji meant the coming of twenty-one crores of Indians", and he held it a happy augury for India, because it might lead to the solution of Hindu-Muslim problem. Gandhi in his address said: "Brethren, I am a *bania*, and there is no limit to my greed. It had always been my dream and heart's desire to speak not only

for twenty-one crores but for the thirty crores of Indians. Today you may not accept that position of mine. But I may assure you that my early upbringing and training in my childhood and youth have been to strive for Hindu-Muslim unity, and none today may dismiss it merely as a craze of my old age. My heart is, however, confident that God will grant me that position when I may speak for the whole of India, and if I may have to die striving for that ideal, I shall achieve the peace of my heart."

The last week of February was markedly dull. For several days Gandhi was not sent for by the Viceroy. It seemed that the break had come. The Working Committee members conferred together to discuss their future plans. They prepared to leave Delhi for their respective provinces and they felt certain that as soon as the break was definitely announced, they would be arrested. Then suddenly on February 27 Gandhi was called by the Viceroy for an interview which lasted for over three hours. Lord Irwin was anxious that the negotiations should not break. No final agreement was reached, but Lord Irwin, who was then extremely tired, suggested a further meeting. "Good night, Mr. Gandhi, and my prayers go with you," were his parting words, as Gandhi, staff in hand, set out on foot for his five-mile journey to Dr. Ansari's house.

The next day Gandhi sent a note on picketing, and the Viceroy exchanged notes of the proposed settlement. Lord Irwin demanded definite conclusions from the Congress on each of the points raised on or before March 1, when they were to meet again.

At 2.30 p.m., on the appointed day, Gandhi went to see the Viceroy. There were many hurdles to be crossed. Apart from the serious differences between New Delhi and London, there were those in the Indian Civil Service who were engaged in a deep and tortuous game. The die-hard opinion was very much against the settlement. "The loss of India would be final and fatal to us," said Churchill. "It could not fail to be part of a process that would reduce us to the scale of a minor power." Lord Irwin refused the police inquiry. The most he was ready to do was to have any case investigated on the spot by the local authorities themselves. On March 1, the situation appeared desperate and Gandhi left the Viceregal Lodge at 6 p.m.

The Working Committee was firm and unanimous, and though listening with respect to Gandhi, was in no mood to water down the

conditions of the truce. Sastri intervened and fervently pleaded before the Congress leaders not to be too exacting over the details if the principle of an impartial tribunal was conceded by the Government. As a result the Working Committee altered its draft formula in certain respects, without affecting the principle of its terms for truce. In the meantime, Sapru and Jayakar had impressed on the Viceroy the imperative need of the Government agreeing to the principle of the Congress demand for an independent tribunal to go into police excesses.

Gandhi saw the Viceroy again at midnight, on March 2, for exchanging notes on the points raised by the Working Committee. Certain points were cleared, and the situation that appeared so gloomy had slightly improved. Gandhi returned to his residence at one, and immediately called the Working Committee members and narrated in full the discussions with the Viceroy. At two in the morning he started spinning the 220 yards of yarn, his daily quota, and commenced his twenty-four hours' silence, it being Monday. He slept only an hour and half, and got up at four to say his morning prayers.

On March 3, Gandhi secured a concession on salt tax but a formidable difficulty arose over the restitution of lands of the Bardoli peasants. Sardar Patel had promised the peasants that when peace was made their lands would be restored. Once more it seemed that negotiations must break down. The Viceroy refused to concede the demand about the restoration of land, when it had passed to a third party, but he at last agreed to insert in the draft a statement indicating Gandhi's objection to the clause. At two, he came back to his residence. A formula on picketing had been agreed earlier in the negotiations. Release of the political prisoners was promised. The Viceroy would give Gandhi a note to the Bombay Government so that he might take with them the question of the confiscated lands. Gandhi had agreed that the scope of future discussion at the resumed Round Table Conference should be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the conference—in other words, the terms of reference would be the January statement made by the Premier. There was one more hurdle to be crossed. Gandhi had all along made it clear that civil disobedience could not be finally stopped or given up, as it was the only weapon in the hands of the people.

It could, however, be suspended. Lord Irwin objected to this word and wanted finality about the word to which Gandhi would not agree. Ultimately the word "discontinued" was used.

The Working Committee members were by no means satisfied. Patel objected to the formula on the question of confiscated lands. Jawaharlal deplored the acceptance of a basis of discussion short of Complete Independence. Nobody thought the undertaking to release prisoners was sufficiently comprehensive. Gandhi interrogated member after member of the committee—should he break on prisoners? On lands? On picketing? On what? Reluctantly the Working Committee accepted the settlement.

The talks were resumed in the night of March 4, and Gandhi left the Viceroy at half past one to tell the Working Committee members that an agreement was reached. There was nothing more to be said. At noon, on March 5, a truce was signed by Irwin and Gandhi at Viceroy's House. Lord Irwin suggested that they should drink each other's health in tea. Gandhi agreed, but said that his own part of the toast should be with water, lemon and a pinch of salt only." They joked freely and shared in merriment over Churchill's lurid accounts of "half-naked fakir". After prolonged conversation, Gandhi had apparently forgotten the shawl. At once Lord Irwin picked it up, remarking with a gentle smile, "Gandhi, you haven't so much on, you know, that you can afford to leave this behind."

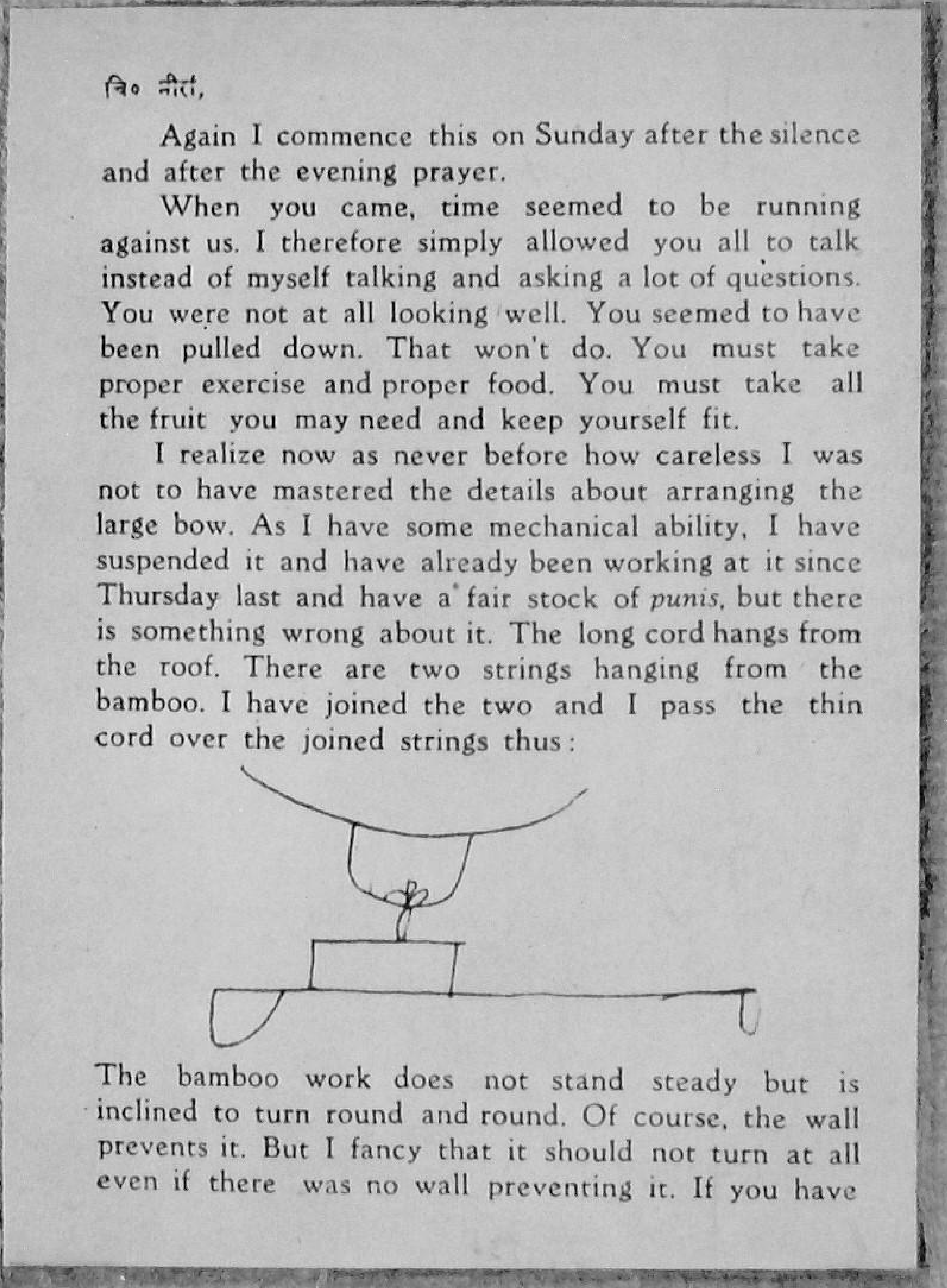
The agreement was the result of a fortnight's negotiations during which Gandhi visited Viceregal Lodge eight times, and spent there altogether twenty-four hours. The document was published in the form of a Home Department notification.

"Civil disobedience," the notification said, "will be effectively discontinued and reciprocal action will be taken by the Government. The effective discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement means the effective discontinuance of all activities in furtherance thereof, by whatever methods pursued, in particular, (1) organized defiance of the provisions of any law, (2) the movement for the non-payment of land revenue and other legal dues, (3) publication of any news-sheet in support of the civil disobedience movement, and (4) attempts to influence civil and military servants or village officials against the Government or to persuade them to resign their posts." Two clauses related to the question of the boycott. It was

laid down that "as regards the boycott of foreign goods, there are two definite issues involved: first, the character of the boycott, and secondly, the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of the Government is as follows: they approve of the encouragement of the Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material condition of India. But the boycott of non-Indian goods has been directed during the civil disobedience movement chiefly against the British goods. It is accepted that a boycott . . . organized for this purpose will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of the constitutional questions between representatives of British India, of the Indian states, and of His Majesty's Government and political parties in England, which the settlement is intended to secure. It is, therefore, agreed that the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement connotes the definite discontinuance of the employment of the boycott of the British commodities as a political weapon. In regard to the methods employed in furtherance of the replacement of non-Indian by Indian goods or against the consumption of intoxicating liquor and drugs, resort will not be had to methods coming within the category of picketing, except within the limits permitted by the ordinary law. Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law. If any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended."

After this there followed a clause relating to the inquiry into the police excesses. "Mr. Gandhi," the notification observed "has drawn the attention of Government to specific allegations against the conduct of the police, and represented the desirability of a public inquiry into them. In the present circumstances, Government see great difficulty in this course and feel that it must inevitably lead to charges and countercharges, and so militate against the re-establishment of peace. Having regard to these considerations, Mr. Gandhi agreed not to press the matter."

The notification then proceeded to define the action which would be taken by the Government as a result of the cessation of civil disobedience, in relation to such matters as the withdrawal of ordinances and other special measures, the procedure to be adopted



चि० मीरां,

Again I commence this on Sunday after the silence and after the evening prayer.

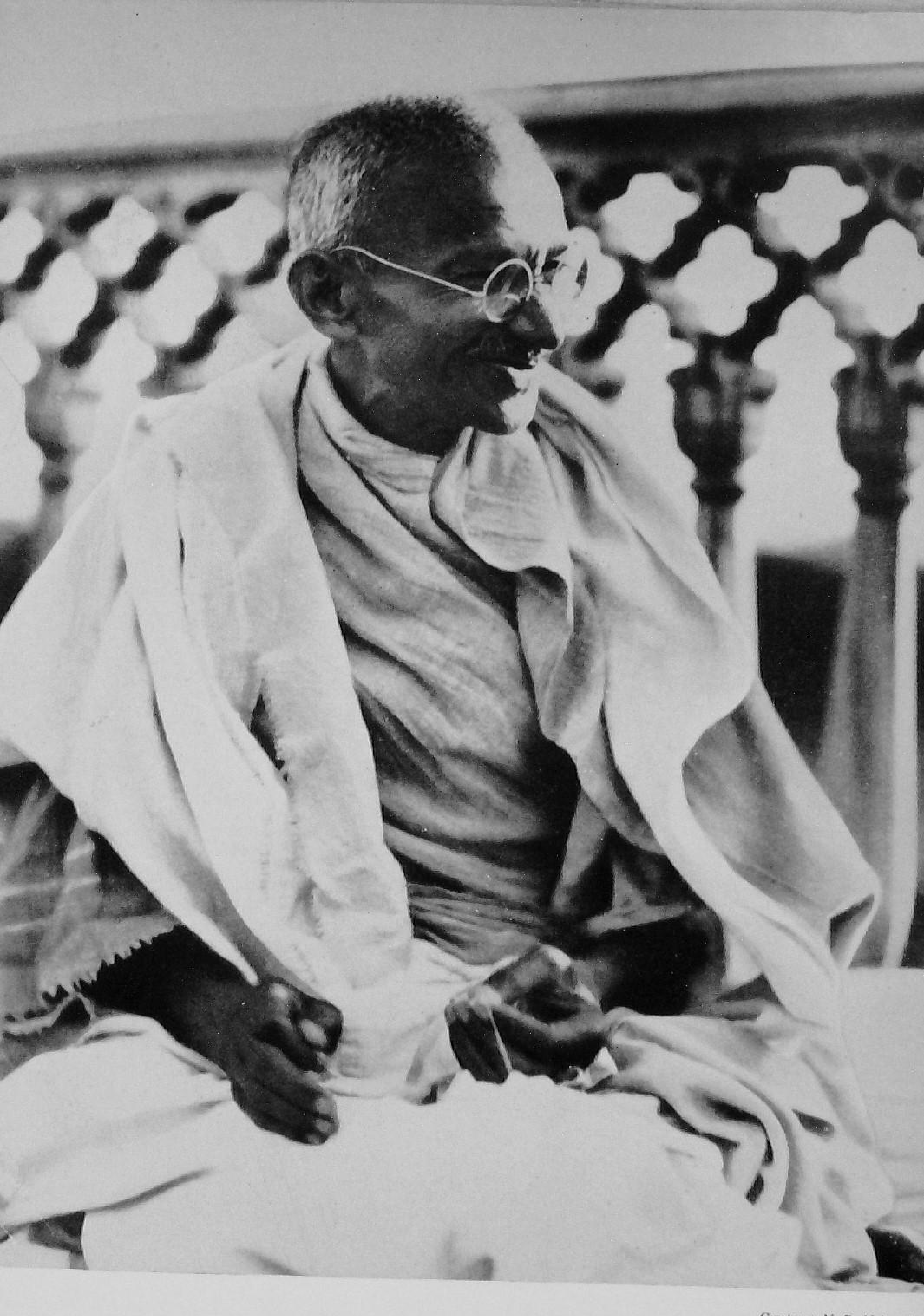
When you came, time seemed to be running against us. I therefore simply allowed you all to talk instead of myself talking and asking a lot of questions. You were not at all looking well. You seemed to have been pulled down. That won't do. You must take proper exercise and proper food. You must take all the fruit you may need and keep yourself fit.

I realize now as never before how careless I was not to have mastered the details about arranging the large bow. As I have some mechanical ability, I have suspended it and have already been working at it since Thursday last and have a fair stock of *punis*, but there is something wrong about it. The long cord hangs from the roof. There are two strings hanging from the bamboo. I have joined the two and I pass the thin cord over the joined strings thus:

The bamboo work does not stand steady but is inclined to turn round and round. Of course, the wall prevents it. But I fancy that it should not turn at all even if there was no wall preventing it. If you have

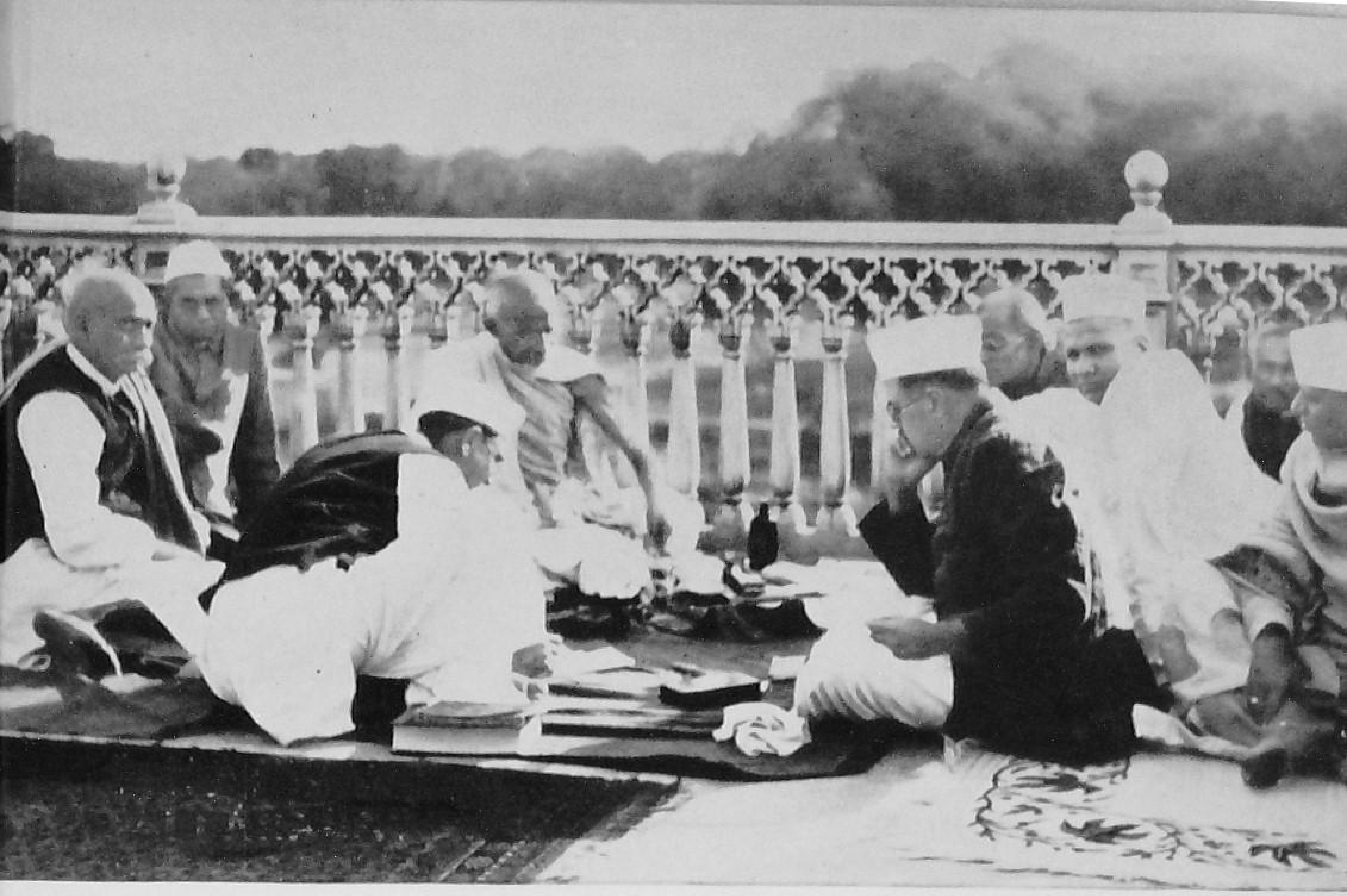
Courtesy : Navajivan Trust

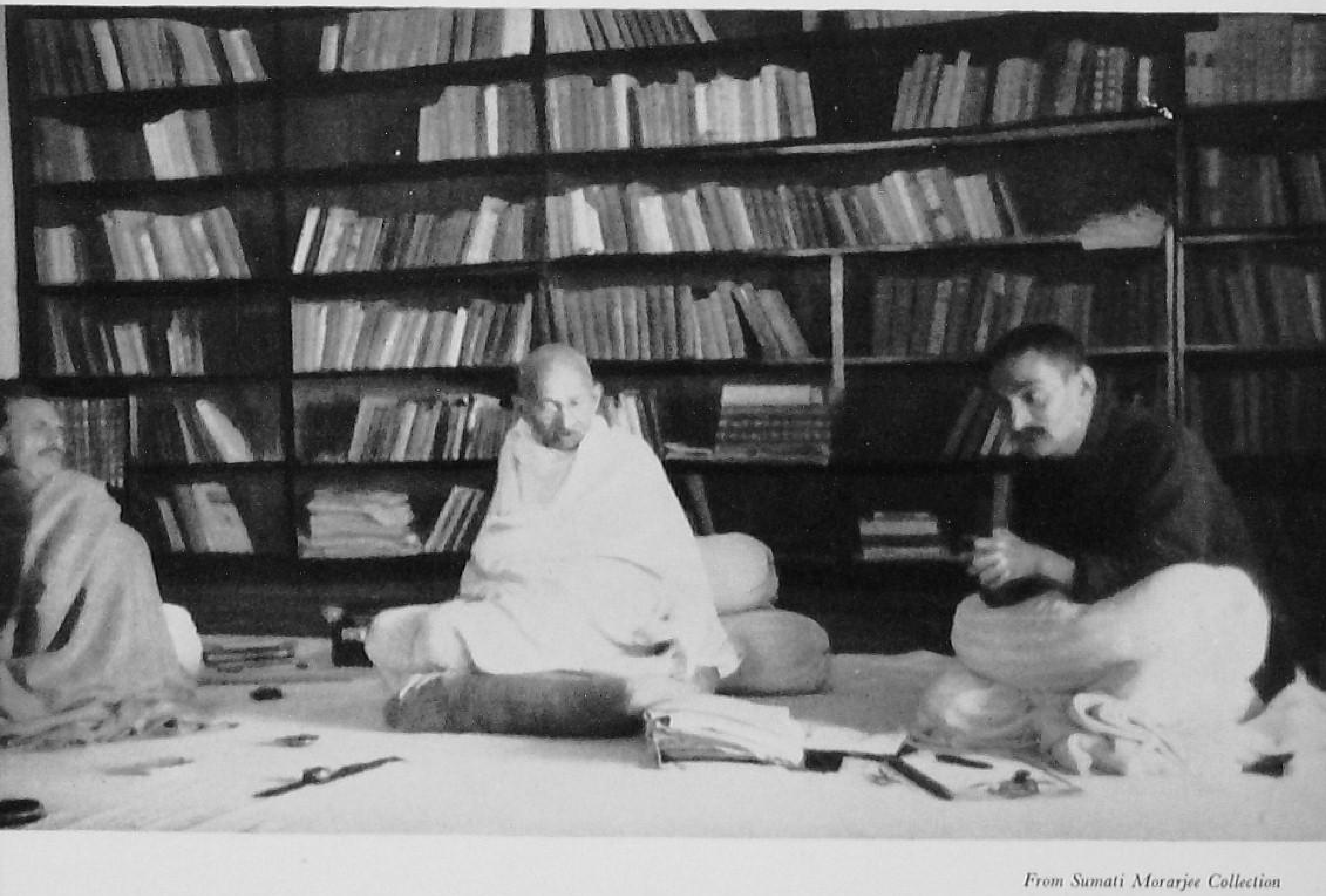
Gandhi's letter to Mirabehn, dated Yeravda, May 25, 1930, detailing with a drawing his experiment with a carding bow



Courtesy : N. J. Nalawala

Gandhi at Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, January 1931



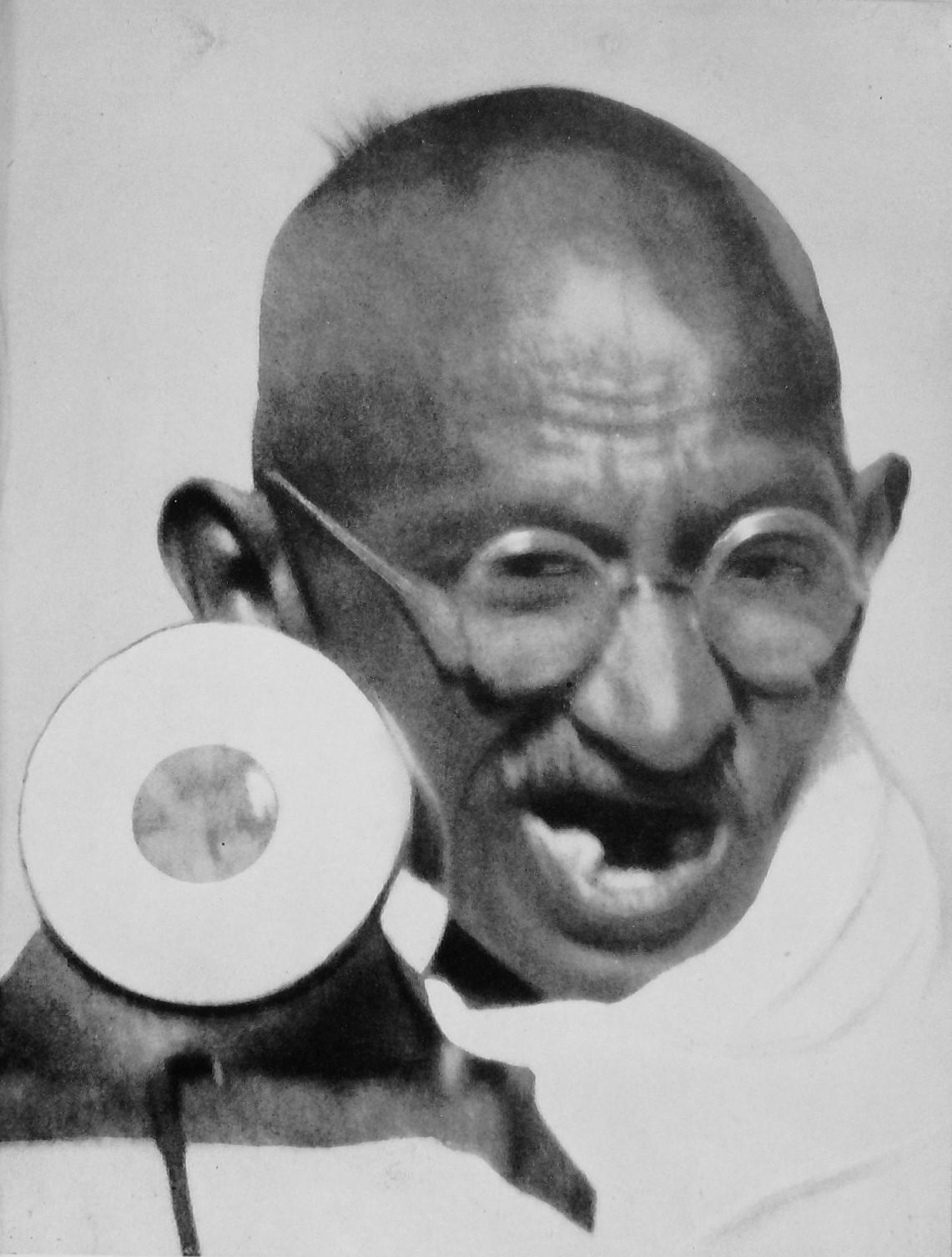


From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Working Committee meeting at Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, February 1931
Gandhi in conference with Rajendra Prasad and Kripalani at Swaraj Bhawan, February 1931

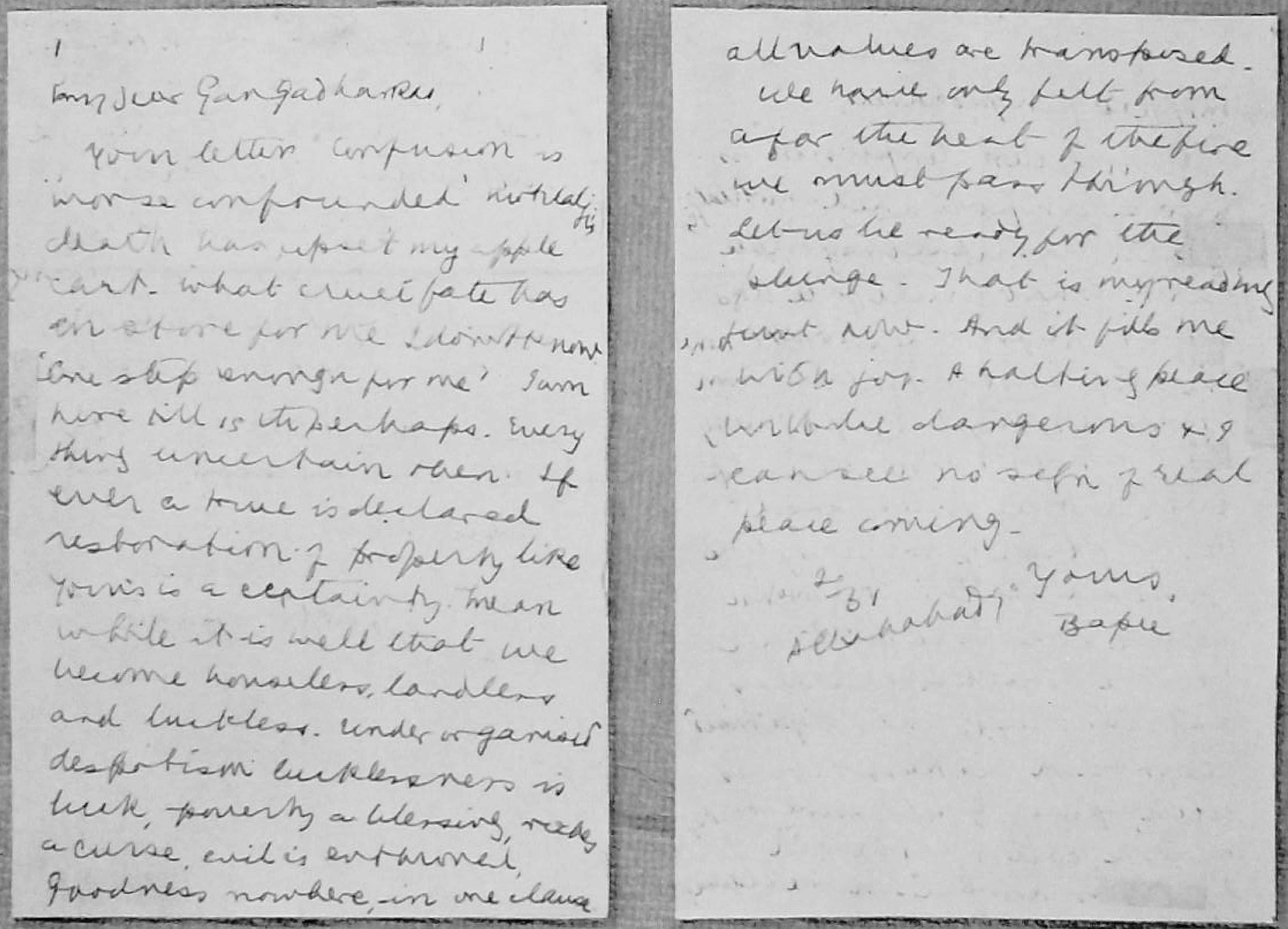
Courtesy : P. N. Verma

Cremation ground at Allahabad where Gandhi said " Motilalji's pyre is being dedicated at the altar of the nation ", February 6, 1931



Courtesy : N. J. Nalawala

Gandhi at the mike, February 1931



My dear Gangadharrao,

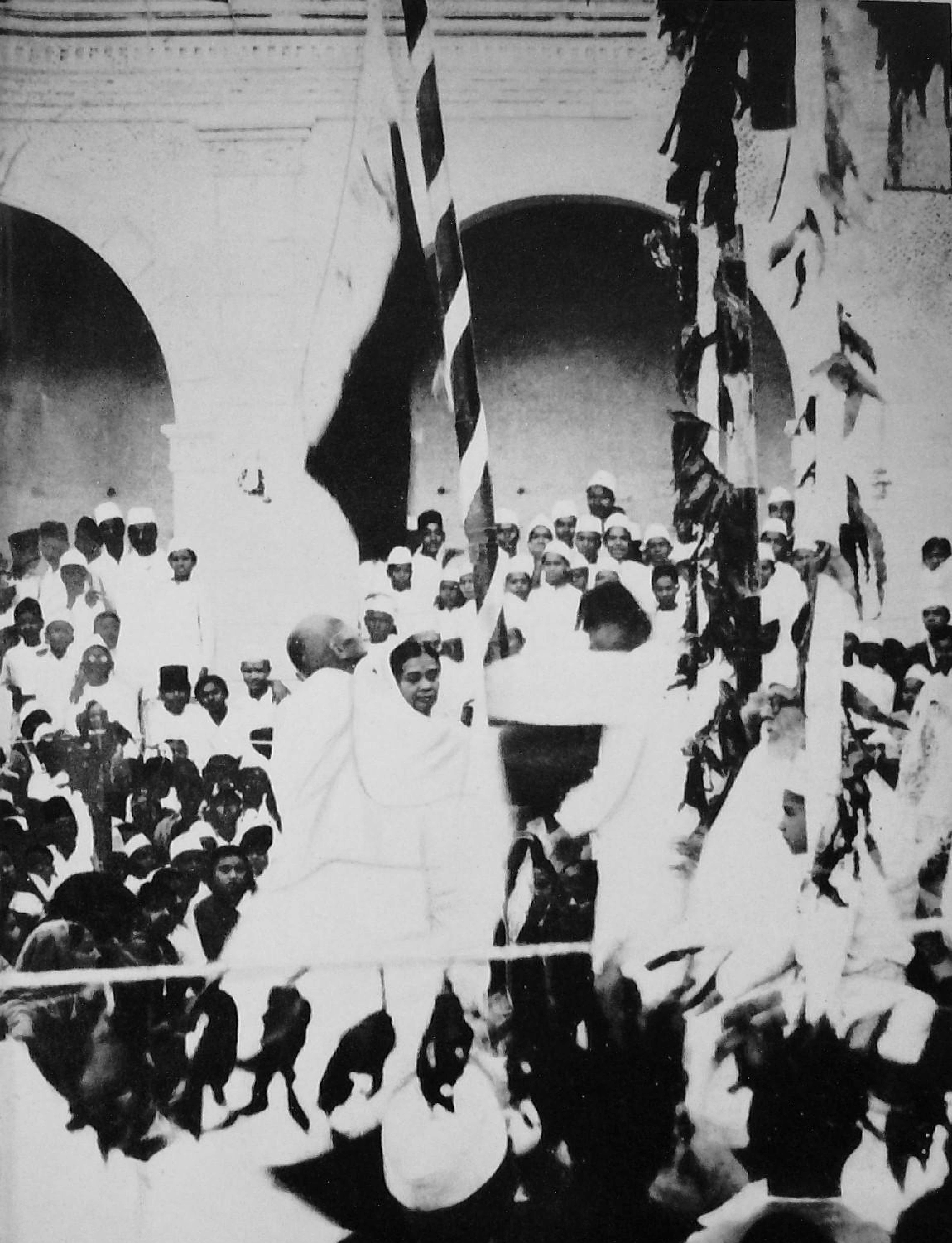
Your letter. 'Confusion is worse confounded.' Motilalji's death has upset my apple cart. What cruel fate has in store for me I don't know. 'One step enough for me.' I am here till 15th perhaps. Every thing uncertain then. If ever a truce is declared restoration of property like yours is a certainty. Meanwhile it is well that we become houseless, landless and luckless. Under organised despotism lucklessness is luck, poverty a blessing, riches a curse, evil is enthroned, goodness nowhere,—in one word all values are transposed. We have only felt from afar the heat of the fire we must pass through. Let us be ready for the plunge. That is my reading for now. And it fills me with joy. A halting place would be dangerous & I can see no sign of real peace coming.

Yours,
Bapu

10/2/31
Allahabad

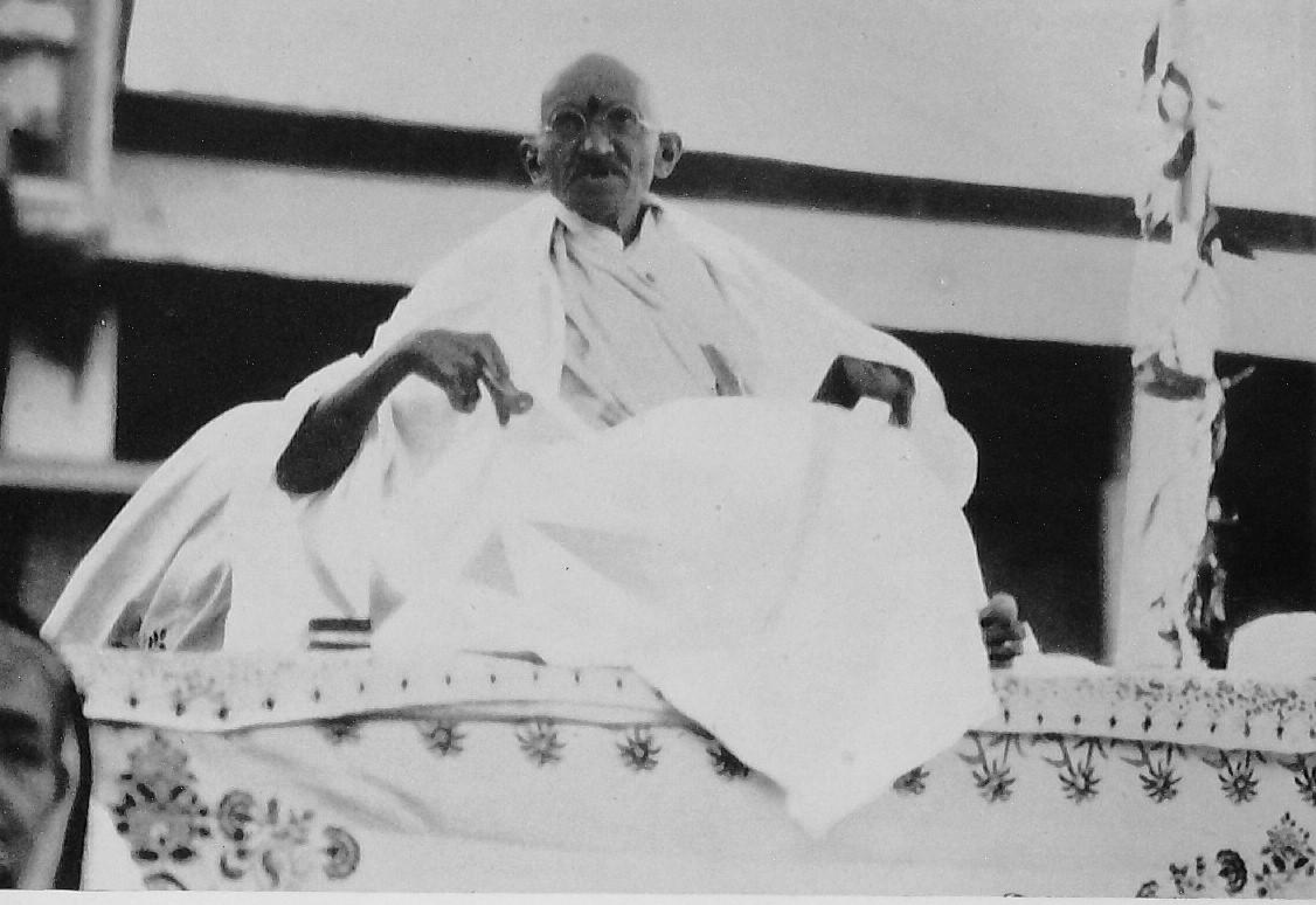
Courtesy Gangadharrao Deshpande

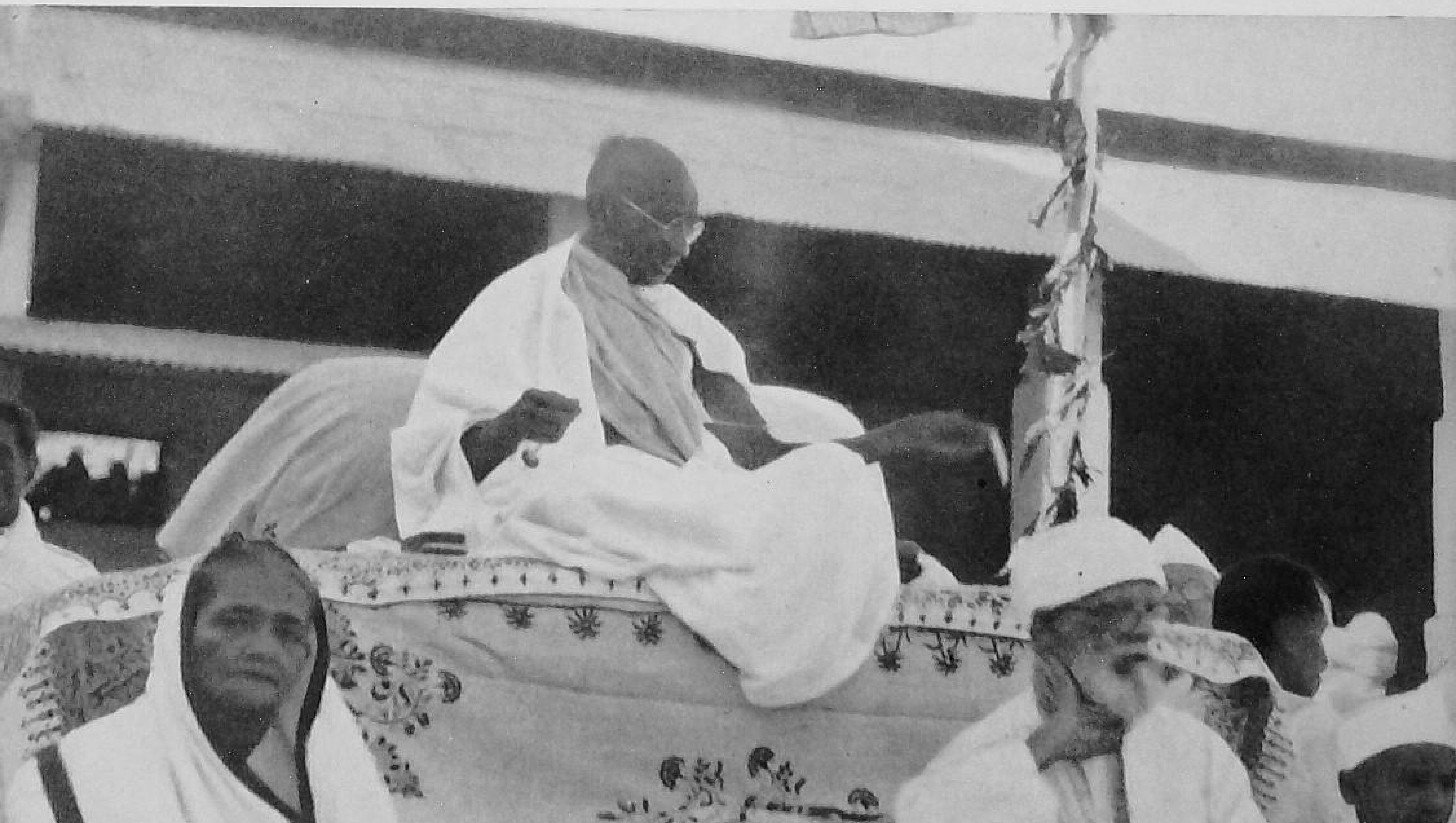
Gandhi's letter to Gangadharrao Deshpande, dated Allahabad, February 10, 1931



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi hoisting the national flag in Ahmedabad on his first visit to the city after his release, March 1931





Courtesy : Balvant Bhatt

Gandhi at a public meeting in Ahmedabad, March 1931

with regard to legal proceedings initiated in connection with the Congress campaign, and the arrangements which would be made concerning the imposition of fines, the forfeiture of property and of Government posts, and the stationing of punitive police in certain areas. These clauses were too detailed and technical. Among them was one which laid down that "those prisoners will be released who are undergoing imprisonment in connection with the civil disobedience movement for offences which did not involve violence, other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence." A clause relating to the question of salt said that "the Government are unable to condone breaches of the existing law relating to the salt administration, nor are they able, in the present financial conditions of the country, to make substantial modifications in the Salt Acts." However, for the sake of giving relief to certain of the poorer classes, they are prepared to extend their administrative provisions, on lines already prevailing in certain places, in adjoining areas where salt can be collected or made, to collect or make salt for domestic consumption or sale within such villages, but not for sale to, or trading with, individuals living outside them. The fines paid were not to be returned, but those not realized were to be remitted. Property confiscated, if still in the Government's possession, was to be returned, subject to certain reservations. Local Governments were to pursue a liberal policy in reinstating officials who had resigned.

The notification concluded with the following remarks: "In the event of the Congress failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement, Government will take such action as may, in consequence, become necessary for the protection of the public and individuals and the due observance of law and order."

The agreement was drafted by Gandhi with slight alterations by Lord Irwin. Only on two points, the Viceroy had not yielded. One was in regard to the payment of compensation to sufferers in the movement and the other related to punishment of the police for their brutalities.

Immediately on the publication of the agreement, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution endorsing the terms of the provisional settlement and directed all Congress committees to take immediate action in accordance with them. The resolution said: "The committee hopes that the country will carry out the terms

agreed to in so far as they relate to various Congress activities and is of opinion that on a strict fulfilment of the obligations, undertaken on behalf of the Congress, will depend the advance of India towards Purna Swaraj."

In an interview to the press, Gandhi said that in the agreement nothing vital had been lost, and no surrender of principle made. He addressed the journalists for ninety minutes without the aid of a single note. "For a settlement of this character," he said, "it is not possible nor wise to say which is the victorious party. If there is any victory, I should say it belongs to both." He then spoke of the work that lay before the Congress and the nation, appealing to the British to realize that they must be prepared to let India feel the same glow of freedom which they themselves would die in order to possess. He then referred to the missing of "the enchanting word" Purna Swaraj in the agreement, but he observed that "independence is India's birthright, as it is of any other nation, and India cannot be satisfied with anything less". Concluding the address, he said:

"The Congress has embarked deliberately, though provisionally, on a career of co-operation. If Congressmen honourably and fully implement the conditions applicable to them of the settlement, the Congress will obtain an irresistible prestige, and also would have inspired the Government with confidence in its ability to ensure peace, as, I believe, it has proved its ability to conduct civil disobedience."

Appealing to the terrorists he said: "I want them to be patient, and give the Congress, or if they will, me a chance. After all it is hardly a full year since the Dandi march. Let them wait yet for a while. Let them preserve their precious lives for the service of the motherland to which all will be presently called, and let them give to the Congress an opportunity of securing the release of all the political prisoners, and may be even rescuing from the gallows those who are condemned to them as being guilty of murder. But I want to raise no false hopes. I can only state publicly what is my own and the Congress aspiration. It is for us to make the effort. The result is always in God's hands."

In the course of Gandhi's talks with Lord Irwin he had pleaded for the release of political prisoners, other than the civil disobedience prisoners, numbering about 90,000. The latter were going to be

discharged as part of the agreement. There were some hundreds of others, both those convicted after trial, and detenus particularly in Bengal, who were alleged by Government to be actual or potential revolutionaries of the violent type. Gandhi had pleaded for their release, not necessarily as part of the agreement, but as eminently desirable, in order to relieve the political tension. He pleaded also for the commutation of death sentences on Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajaguru, but Lord Irwin was firm.

At Delhi Gandhi was fully occupied and all his time was allotted to somebody or something. His innermost thoughts on matters of the past, of the present, and especially of the future, he revealed to his close colleagues in his early morning walks. In one of those intimate talks, he told Jawaharlal Nehru his ideas about the future of the Congress. Nehru had imagined that the Congress, as such, would automatically cease to exist with the coming of freedom. Gandhi thought that the Congress should continue, but on one condition: that it passed a self-denying ordinance, laying it down that none of its members could accept a paid job under the state, and if any one wanted such a post of authority in the state, he would have to leave the Congress. The whole idea underlying it was that the Congress by its detachment and having no axe to grind could exercise tremendous moral pressure on the executive as well other departments of the Government, and thus keep them on the right track.

On March 6, at a press conference, Gandhi was subjected to a heavy barrage of questions. "Is the settlement consistent with the Lahore Congress resolution?" asked a correspondent. "It is most decidedly," remarked Gandhi. "There is nothing to prevent the Congress at Karachi from reaffirming the Lahore resolution, and there is nothing to prevent the Congressmen from taking up that position at the forthcoming Round Table Conference. In fact, I do not think I am betraying any confidence, when I say, that I took good care to ascertain that point and make the Congress position clear before approaching the question of settlement. I should feel bound to press for Purna Swaraj at the conference, and we should deny our very existence if we did not press for it."

"There seems to be a gulf of difference between the position at Lahore affirming Complete Independence and the present parleys leading on to a settlement," remarked another correspondent. "Even

when I moved the Lahore resolution," said Gandhi, "I made quite clear that independence need not mean complete dissociation from British connection. If we have been fighting a violent war, there might have been ruin for one or the other party. But ours has been a non-violent war presupposing compromise. We have all the while assumed it, desired it. My letter to Lord Irwin was conceived in that spirit. The provisional compromise now makes an opening for us to go and ask for what we want. As a satyagrahi, it was my duty to seek for such an opening."

"What is your idea of Purna Swaraj? Would it be possible within the British Empire?" asked another correspondent. "It would be possible but on terms of absolute equality," observed Gandhi. "Complete Independence may mean separation and the popular imagination does understand it in that light. But, if we remain part of the Commonwealth, on terms of absolute equality, instead of Downing Street being the centre of the Empire, Delhi should be the centre. India has a population of about 300 millions and that is a factor which cannot be ignored. Friends suggest that England will never be able to reconcile itself to that position. But I do not despair."

One correspondent wanted to know, if Gandhi would agree to become Prime Minister of the future Government of a free India. "No," he answered. "It will be reserved for younger minds and stouter hands." Supposing the people wanted him and insisted? There was a roar of laughter as Gandhi smilingly replied, "I will seek shelter behind journalists like you."

Two days after the agreement was signed, Gandhi addressed a mass meeting of over 50,000 people in Delhi:

"Before I begin, I must tell you how much I miss here Maulana Shaukat Ali. He has arrived this morning and it is a matter of inexpressible sorrow to me that he should not be here, and I have no doubt you also will share my sorrow. But I may assure you that I shall miss no opportunity, leave no stone unturned, to persuade the maulana and other Musalmans to work with us on the same platform. That preamble will give you an inkling of what I am about to say today. The settlement that has been just arrived at will fail of effect without a real heart unity between Hindus and Musalmans. Without that unity our going to the conference will be of no avail. No one will pretend that the conference can help

us to achieve that unity. A heart unity can be achieved between pure hearts purged of distrust, and that can be achieved only outside the conference. In this I seek your co-operation and ask you to count on my doing my utmost."

"In a letter I received yesterday, the correspondent asks, why I should not make the same advances to the Musalmans as I did to the Viceroy. Why, he asks, should I not wait on esteemed Musalman friends who are desirous of unity and beg on bended knees for their co-operation? I like the suggestion and the correspondent may be sure that I shall leave nothing undone to plead with my Musalman friends. But you must understand that there are limits to the capacity of an individual, and the moment he flatters himself that he can undertake all tasks, God is there to humble his pride. For myself, I am gifted with enough humility to look even to babes and sucklings for help. And that reminds me that, in this mission of mine, I can count on the hearty and active co-operation of my sisters who beat all previous records of suffering and sacrifice during the last heroic campaign. To them I say: If you are convinced that the Hindu-Muslim unity is a *sine qua non*, I ask you to use against your countrymen the same weapon of satyagraha that you used so effectively against Government. Tell your men that you will non-co-operate with them, you will not cook for them, you will starve yourselves and them so long as they do not wash their hands of these dirty communal squabbles. Assure me of your co-operation, and you will add tremendously to my strength and to my power of pleading.

"We Hindus are described, to a certain extent, rightly, as the majority community. Well, to them I would say the same thing as I used to do in 1921, namely, that voluntary surrender on the part of either community, preferably by the majority community, of all rights and privileges would immediately effect this unity. It would be a great thing, a brave thing, for Hindus to achieve this act of self-denial. Let them say to the Musalmans, 'Have as big a share of the spoils as you want, we will be content to serve you.' What after all are the things you are quarrelling for? Not, indeed, for air and water. It is for seats in legislatures and local bodies. What has the vast majority of you got to do with them? How many of you can go there? And what can you do there? Outside the legislatures you did wonderful things; you defied the ordinances, you

defied lathi charges and firing orders, because you were conscious of your strength. If you retain the same consciousness, what would it matter to you if your parliament had all Musalmans in it and no Hindu? I am sick of these squabbles for seats, this scramble for the shadow of power. How I wish I could bring home to the Congressmen that they should have nothing to do with these legislatures. The very act of voluntary surrender will clothe you with a power undreamt of before.

"And you sisters, what would you do by going to parliament? Do you aspire after collectorships, commissionerships or even the viceroyalty? And what would you do if one of you were to be the Viceroy of India? I know you would not care to, for the Viceroy has got to order the executions and hangings, a thing you would heartily detest. Supposing we, the leaders, were to run a race for getting the viceroyalty we would simply strangle ourselves. That is not the prize we have set our hearts on. We crave to be humble servants of the country. It is this spirit of service which I want to permeate the atmosphere. I want you to join me and share this aspiration. But if it does not appeal to you, you had better give me up, for that is the condition on which I tender my service. I have no other secret but that of voluntary surrender."

At this stage a "red" leaflet full of posers was handed to him.

" 'Where is peace?' asks the nameless writer of this leaflet. 'The late Pandit Motilal Nehru thought of the Garhwalis even on his death-bed. What have you done for them?' That is another question that has been put to me. Well, I may tell you that when on the last day of his presence on earth he referred to the Garhwalis, only I was by his side, no one else, not even Jawaharlal. I consider that as his last will and testament to me, as those were the last words I heard from him. But I know, much better than you, what he was thinking of. The writer subscribes himself 'Young India', but I may tell him that I am still the editor of *Young India*. Let him who would oust me from the editorship come to me and I will tell him what Panditji was referring to. You must remember that there were no 'peace talks' at that time, the peace ambassadors had not even arrived then, and the question of the freedom of the Garhwalis could not be in the late Panditji's mind. He asked whether the relations and dependents of the Garhwalis were being properly looked after.

"The next question is about Bhagat Singh and others who are under death sentence. How can there be peace, I am asked, when a sentence of death is hanging over the heads of these patriots? It is unfortunate that the young men distributing these pamphlets should not understand such a simple thing. They ought to understand that we have entered into no peace treaty. It is a provisional, temporary settlement, we have arrived at. I beseech the young men not to bid good-bye to common sense, to cool courage, to patience, and to reason. I have claimed to be a young man of sixty-two. But even if I were to be labelled as a dilapidated old fogy, I have a right to appeal to your good sense. I do not want to take for granted all that old men say to you, but I want you to consider it and weigh it, and if you find that we 'old' men have bungled, that we have been guilty of weakness, get us to abdicate and assume the reins yourselves. But that presupposes cool courage and solid common sense.

"But let me tell you why Bhagat Singh and the rest have not been released. May be, if you had been negotiating, you might have secured much better terms from the Viceroy, but we the Working Committee would secure no more than what we have. I may tell you that throughout the negotiations I was not acting on my own, I was backed by the whole Congress Working Committee. And we brought all the pressure we could to bear on our negotiations and satisfied ourselves with what in justice we could have under the provisional settlement. We could not as negotiators of the provisional truce forget our pledge of truth and non-violence, forget the bounds of justice.

"But it is still open to us to secure the release of all you have mentioned, and that can be done only if you will implement the settlement. Let 'Young India' stand by the settlement and fulfil all its conditions, and if, God willing, Bhagat Singh and others are alive when we have arrived at the proper stage, they would not only be saved from the gallows but released.

"But I will address to 'Young India' a word of warning. These things are sooner asked for than obtained. You want to secure the freedom of those condemned of violence. There is nothing wrong about it. My creed of non-violence does not favour the punishment of thieves and dacoits and even murderers. I cannot in all conscience agree to any one being sent to the gallows, much less a

brave man like Bhagat Singh. But I tell you, even you could not save them, unless you fulfil the conditions of the settlement. You cannot do so by violent means. If you pin your faith to violence, take it from me that you will not only not secure Bhagat Singh's release but will have to sacrifice thousands of Bhagat Singhs. I was not prepared to do so, and hence I preferred the way of peace, of non-violence. The way that you have adopted has been on trial for centuries, and history records numerous instances of the truth that those who use the sword shall perish by the sword. You will not stop at using the violent weapon against your rulers, you will use it against your brothers and sisters too, and others of your way of thinking will use it against you.

"I beseech you then, if you want the release of the prisoners, to change your methods, to accept the settlement, and then come and ask me about the Garhwalis and Bhagat Singh. Come to me six months hence, after you have implemented the settlement and gained in strength and ask me the question you are asking today and I promise to satisfy you.

"Having suspended civil disobedience, we enter a period of disciplined obedience. We are now pledged to eschew all passive and active violence, direct and indirect violence, in picketing foreign cloth and liquor shops, but we are further pledged to relax our boycott of all British goods minus British cloth. The settlement is an attempt at re-establishing friendly relations and it, therefore, means that we must lay down all weapons of punishment. Boycott of the British goods was conceived, essentially, as a weapon of punishment and has, therefore, to be suspended. But we have to go ahead more energetically with the constructive programme, boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, the programme which means the economic and moral salvation of our poor starving millions.

"I must also further explain that the relaxation of the boycott of British goods does not mean that we should prefer British goods to Indian goods. Indian goods you will prefer to all foreign goods for all time. Under the present settlement you are pledged not to direct the weapon of punishment against Britishers and accord a favoured treatment to other foreigners. And even that condition does not bind you to prefer British goods to other foreign goods; it binds you not to pursue the policy of aggressive boycott that you did heretofore.

"The boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, as I have said before, should not be relaxed, cannot be relaxed. It is our permanent programme; but it should be purged of all its aggressive forms, social boycott, and persecution of the seller and the consumer. If you say that boycott without these elements will lose all its edge, I will tell you that it argues want of faith in the efficacy of non-violence. Work achieved through aggressive picketing will be of doubtful worth, work achieved through loving persuasive pressure will be lasting. I ask you, therefore, to plead with the foreign cloth seller and liquor seller to give up dealing in foreign cloth and liquor, and take to some more honourable and cleaner calling. As to the constructive part of foreign cloth boycott, I want you to understand that it is impossible to achieve it without khadi. Mill cloth is for those whom the Congress has not been able to reach; for Congressmen, there can be no cloth other than khadi. It is a pity that where a few months ago there were thousands of *taklis* working, they should now be conspicuous by their absence. The period that follows should be one entirely devoted to constructive efforts.

"In conclusion, I should beseech you to realize the supreme importance of discipline. It is open to you to press for a different programme and different policy at Karachi. But let it not be said that we are a people incapable of maintaining discipline. Indiscipline will mean disaster, and make one like me, who is paining to see swaraj in his lifetime, perish in sorrow and grief. It is my earnest prayer that God may give you the power to appreciate what I have said and to attain swaraj by pursuing the path of truth, justice and non-violence."

On March 10, Gandhi reached Ahmedabad where arrangements were made to accord him a magnificent reception, as it was his first entry into the city after the historic march to Dandi, a year ago. One lakh and fifty thousand people waited for hours on the sands of Sabarmati in the scorching sun, when the citizens' address and a purse of Rs. 70,000 were given to him. Replying to the address he justified the agreement, and asked the people to respect it in letter and spirit. "The settlement that had been arrived at was so simple that even a child could understand it and a child should try to understand it." He and the Working Committee had gone as far as they could in arriving at a settlement. "Swaraj was not won thereby but the second door to swaraj was opened," he said.

They were trying to win swaraj by the willing weapon of civil disobedience. Meanwhile, they as satyagrahis should try to open the door through negotiations and settlement, and should fulfil the conditions of the agreement. If they wanted to increase their power manifold, they should effect communal unity, eradicate the drink evil, banish foreign cloth and produce khaddar. Then they would secure Purna Swaraj.

He was anxious to explain the peace terms to the people who had sacrificed their all for the movement. In the course of a statement to the people of Gujarat, he said that "it would be culpable of us to refuse to attend the Round Table Conference." Referring to the need of suspending all fighting activities and undertaking constructive work seriously, he said: "Even as a farmer after tilling the land devotes his entire attention to the growing of crops, so should the Congress workers, after a year of destructive work in the form of civil disobedience, take seriously to the constructive side of the Congress programme."

Addressing the Ahmedabad labourers, he said: "As I think of you my heart goes out for you and I pray to God that the bond of affection between us may be stronger and that you may realize that there is no difference of any kind between you and me. I go about among millowners, I accept their hospitality, but my heart is ever with you. It is my prayer to God, that he may never separate me from you, and that, I may lay down my life in the service of the poor. The swaraj of my dream is the poor man's swaraj. The necessaries of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by the princes and monied men. But that does not mean that you should have palaces like theirs. They are not necessary for happiness. You or I would be lost in them. But, you ought to get all ordinary amenities of life that rich man enjoys. I have not the slightest doubt that swaraj is not Purna Swaraj, until these amenities are guaranteed to you under it. I do not know when we will win it but we have all to strive for it."

Young India, which for some time past had been issued in cyclostyle, reappeared in print on March 12. In the course of his first signed article entitled "How to do it", Gandhi explained the implications of the Delhi agreement and the obligations of the Congress under it. He emphasized that while the truce lasted, it was obligatory on them to respect laws and orders, even if these appeared

capricious. He added: "We need not expect a change of heart in the official world all of a sudden. If, therefore, we are conscious of our strength and our ability to resume civil disobedience, whenever it becomes necessary, we should find no difficulty in obeying even irksome orders."

In the morning of March 12, Gandhi started for Dandi from Ahmedabad. The same route had been selected through which he made his historic march a year ago. He spent four days in the villages of Kheda and Bardoli, not in congratulating the villagers but in asking them to implement the settlement. It was a moving sight to see them bivouacking in simple huts with their animals and children, now ready to go back to their houses, all their belongings assembled in their bullock carts, with children sitting at the top plying their charkhas—as ready to get back to, as they were ready to come out of, their homes at their leader's call.

The peasants' sacrifices were great. One village, for example, had incurred a loss of about Rs. 3,00,000 in order to avoid a payment of revenue amounting to Rs. 69,000. But Gandhi chided gently a mention of such a fact in a statement made by the workers. "The proportion of losses to the revenue that you have worked out is unfair to you and to your suffering," he said. "The amount of the revenue was not the issue. The issue was the refusal to pay and to take the consequences. You say, you have suffered much, that you will have to borrow if you are to pay the revenue dues. If you cannot pay, as I know many of you cannot, there is a provision for suspension. But do not give the impression that you are unwilling to pay. Ask for suspension wherever necessary and promise to pay up as soon as you are on your legs, and let your word be bond." He wanted the people to implement the agreement. Adverting to the losses, he said at another meeting: "This taluk has suffered to the tune of thirteen lakhs. How, you will ask, can there be truce when there is no compensation clause in the terms of agreement. Well neither the Sardar nor I ever promised that we would get you compensation for the losses you may have to suffer. If there was any such promise, we should be ashamed of a breach of it." At another place he said, "What are these losses? Did we not count the cost when we launched the campaign? They were part of the sacrifice that we knew would have to be made. For them no compensation could be asked, nor should be asked for. It would take away from

the merit of the sacrifice. There was one thing, however, which was no part of the sacrifice, namely, to part with your ancestral lands. For that, you may take my word and the Sardar's word that we will never rest in peace until we have secured our lands. I will not tell you how it is going to be done, but you may take it that we will lay down our lives for restoration of the lands to their original rightful owners."

Gandhi would not allow any bluster to mar his mission. His visit to Dandi or to the little cottage in Karadi, where he was arrested, was the least dramatic. It was open to him to go to the seashore, pick the salt himself, and get the villagers to do so. But he would not be tempted into doing such a thing. In the cottage itself, he was surrounded by workers who were anxious to make the best of the hard earned concession. "Supposing we went there and dug big tanks for storage of brine? asked a worker. "No, you will do no such thing," he said. "Whilst we will insist on no natural salt being destroyed or mixed up with wet earth, we may do nothing which will infringe the spirit of the agreement." At the mass meeting he said: "The spectacular part of the programme is over. You marched in your thousands to collect and manufacture salt, for, then you wanted to defy the provisions of an unnatural law. Now you will have no such demonstration. Every villager will collect enough salt for his purposes and sell as much to his neighbours as he can carry in a head load. But you may not load your bullock carts with sacks of salt and go to towns like Navsari and open a shop there. Trade and marketing are out of the question. We look forward to the day when we shall make and market our salt, but as I knew that the day was coming soon and for certain, I satisfied myself with this small concession as a term of truce."

On March 14, the very day Gandhi was exhorting the villagers of Karadi, Lord Irwin, speaking at the state banquet in Jaipur, observed: "It had seemed not many weeks ago that that the work would have to be pursued in an atmosphere surcharged with uncertainty and mistrust. I am very happy to think that those mists have to a great extent been dispelled. Throughout conversations with Mr. Gandhi, I felt complete assurance that I could implicitly trust his word."

In the third week of March, Gandhi was in Bombay, conferring with his colleagues. The two days' crowded programme kept him

incessantly busy and even on silent Monday he could get no rest or sleep, having to listen to numerous interviewers. On that day he broke his silence at eight in the evening, and an important interview with Subhas Chandra Bose kept him busy until half past two, the next morning. After about an hour's sleep, he was up again for the morning prayer, having thus kept awake twenty-three out of the twenty-four hours of that day. Interviews began again soon after the prayer and the whole day was fully occupied with interviews and public meetings.

The reception that the citizens of Bombay gave to Gandhi was magnificent. Addressing the eager audience, he said:

"An age has passed since I appeared before you on my release. A new age has begun and I appear before you this evening to deliver again my message which, however, is different from the one on the previous occasion. That day's message was simple, today's is comparatively complex. For full twelve months, we have developed a war mentality, we thought of war, we talked of war and nothing but war. Now we have to sing a completely different tune. We are in the midst of truce. With some of us, I know the mention of the word 'truce' sends a shiver through their body. That is because we had thought of nothing but war and had believed that there could be no compromise. But that was not a position becoming a satyagrahi. The satyagrahi whilst he is ready for fight must be equally eager for peace. He must welcome any honourable opportunity for peace. The Congress Working Committee saw such an opportunity and availed itself of it. The essential condition of a compromise is that there should be nothing humiliating, nothing panicky about it. You may be sure, whilst I was being inundated with telegrams to make peace at any price, I was absolutely unmoved by them. I am inured to such things, and I was absolutely firm that I must not allow any of these telegrams to make me flinch from whatever decision my inner voice gave me. Whilst, however, a satyagrahi never yields to panic or hesitancy, neither does he think of humiliating the other party, of reducing it to an abject surrender. He may not swerve from the path of justice and may not dictate impossible terms. He may not pitch his demands too high, neither may he pitch them too low. The present settlement, I submit, satisfies all these conditions. One of the terms of the settlement seems to have caused some disappointment in certain quarters, and some have

rushed in to condemn settlement on that account. They complain that we ought not to have entered into the settlement until we had secured the release of all political prisoners. I may tell you that we could not in justice make this demand. Not that there was any lack of will on our part, but the power to make the demand irresistible was lacking. That power will come as soon as we will fulfil all the terms of the settlement that apply to us.

"I may inform you that local governments have been remiss in fulfilling their part of the contract. Some prisoners who ought to have been released are still in prison, some prosecutions—like the Chirner firing case—that ought to have been withdrawn, are still going on. It is a matter for sorrow. If the remissness or failure is deliberate it would be culpable. But it would add to our power and make our case for swaraj more irresistible than ever. One would like to think, however, that such remissness would not be deliberate in view of the stupendous machinery of Government. There is likely to be unintentional delay and inadvertence. If there is deliberate breach of faith, then we have our sovereign remedy. If you look at the settlement, the last clause empowers Government to set its machinery of law and order in motion in the event of failure on the part of the Congress to fulfil its part of the settlement. Need I tell you that the clause necessarily includes its converse? Even as it would be open to Government to set its machinery in motion, it is open to us also to resort to our infallible weapon as soon as we find that there is a deliberate breach.

"But the present delays need not agitate or irritate you. For there is no occasion for it. A satyagrahi has infinite patience, abundant faith in others, and ample hope.

"And now a word of warning. The settlement is obviously provisional. But it necessitates a change in our method of work. Whilst civil disobedience and jail going, or direct action was the method to be followed before the settlement, the way of argument and negotiation takes its place. But let no one forget that the settlement is provisional and the negotiations may break down at any stage. Let us, therefore, keep our powder ever dry and our armour ever bright. Failure should not find us napping, but ready to mobilize at the first command. In the meanwhile let us carry on the process of self-purification with greater vigour and greater faith, so that we may grow in strength day by day.

"And now a word of explanation. The settlement does in no way commit us to a position less than the Lahore resolution. It is open to us to revise the position taken at Lahore but nothing in the settlement would oblige us to do so. You may be sure that we are going to ask for nothing less than independence. Whether we will get it is another matter. It depends upon what power we can exert on the delegates belonging to the parties in India, on what conviction we carry with them. But the fact is there that we may go the whole hog, and there is nothing in the settlement to prevent us. There is the matter of the much talked of safeguards. Now my position is this that it is open to us to ask for a revision *in toto* of the safeguards as suggested by Mr. MacDonald. How far we shall be able to achieve what we want will depend on the extent to which we fulfil the constructive programme which has its own three girders: communal heart unity, complete boycott of foreign cloth and prohibition of drink and drugs. Let us strain every nerve to fulfil our programme and thus make our demand irresistible."

There was another meeting on the same day in the labour area. The Reds forced their entry and planted their flag on the dais. Gandhi was seated between the Tricolour and the Red Flag. A communist leader said that Gandhi had entered into an unholy alliance and signed a treaty which promised power to rajas, maharajas and capitalists. "Where are your eleven points?" he asked. "What about Bhagat Singh and the Meerut prisoners and what is the use of peace without their release?" Gandhi's speech was interrupted occasionally by some hot-headed youths.

"I knew that there were communists in India," he said. "But I had not met them outside the Meerut jail, nor even heard their speeches. I made a point of interviewing the Meerut prisoners two years ago during my tour in U.P. and thus managed to know them somewhat. I have heard one of them this evening, and I may tell them that much as they claim to win swaraj for the working men, I have my doubts about their ability to do so. I made the working men's cause my own long before any of the young communists here were born. I spent the best part of my time in South Africa working for them, I used to live with them, and shared their joys and sorrows. You must now understand why I claim to speak for labour. I expect at least courtesy from you if nothing else. I invite you to come to me and discuss things with me as frankly as you

can. You claim to be communists, but you do not seem to live the life of the communists. I tell you that I am trying my best to live up to the ideal of communism in the best sense of the term. Communism does not exclude courtesy. I am amongst you today, and within a few minutes I will leave you. If you want to carry the country with you, you ought to be able to react on it by reasoning with it. You cannot do so by coercion. You may deal destruction to bring the country round to your view. But how many will you destroy? Not millions. You may kill few thousands if you had millions with you. But today you are no more than a handful. I ask you to convert the Congress if you can and to take charge of it. But you cannot do so by bidding good-bye to the elementary rules of courtesy. And there is no reason why you should be lacking in courtesy, when it is open to you to give vent to your views, when India is tolerant enough to listen to any one who can talk coherently.

"The truce has done no harm to the labourers. I claim that none of my activities has ever harmed the workers, can ever harm them. If the Congress sends its representatives to the conference, they will press for no swaraj other than the swaraj for workers and peasants. Long before the Communist Party was born, the Congress had decided that the swaraj would have no meaning which was not the swaraj for workers and peasants. Perhaps, none of you workers here gets less than a monthly wage of Rs. 20, but I am working for winning swaraj not only for you but those toiling and unemployed millions who don't get even a square meal a day and have to scratch along with a piece of bread and a pinch of salt. But I do not want to deceive you, I must warn you that I do not bear any ill to the capitalists. I can think of doing them no harm. But I want, by means of suffering to awaken them to their sense of duty, I want to melt their hearts and get them to render justice to their less fortunate brethren. They are human beings, and my appeal to them will not go in vain. The history of Japan reveals many an instance of self-sacrificing capitalists. During the last satyagraha, quite a number of capitalists went in for considerable sacrifice, went to jail and suffered. Do you want to estrange them? Don't you want them to work with you for the common end?

"You have asked about the Meerut prisoners. I want you to know that I would release every convict from our prisons, if I had the power. But I could not in justice make their release a condition

precedent for settlement. I may tell you that I am striving my best to get them released, and if only you will co-operate with me by creating a calm atmosphere, we may be able to get all of them released including the Garhwalis. You are talking of independence. Don't I want it as much as you? (Cries of 'substance of independence') Yes, I want substance and not shadow. For the present, I want you to cultivate a little patience and see what the Congress puts forward as its minimum when the time comes. I assure you we will repeat the Lahore resolution at Karachi and if we chance to go to the Round Table Conference, we will either return with what we want or with nothing at all.

" 'What about the eleven points?' you have asked me. They contain the substance of independence to my mind. The peasants and working men are well protected under them. But I could not repeat the points at the time of the settlement, for the simple reason that they were submitted as an alternative to the launching of civil disobedience. We have now been through civil disobedience and if we are invited, we have to go to the Round Table Conference to press our national demand. If we succeed there all the eleven points are secured. You may be sure that no swaraj which does not satisfy the eleven points can be acceptable to me.

"God has given you intellect and talent. Turn them to proper account. I beseech you not to lay an embargo on your reason. God help you."

Many more questions were put to him at the workers' meeting but for want of time he could not reply to them on the spot. He dealt with them in *Young India*. "Many of us feel that you have become a national habit which is useful for the capitalist but tragic for the exploited," was the accusation made by the communists against Gandhi. "The charge is thoughtlessly made," he said. "My experiments began in South Africa and they were made on behalf of the exploited. The latter gained. They gained in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad. If I may share the merit of the Borsad campaign, brilliantly fought by Sardar Vallabhbhai during my absence, but in strict accord with my prescription, and then again in Bardoli, I may say that the peasants had the benefit of the two fights. What may be the last experiment on a nation-wide scale is still being tried. It is yet too soon to forecast the result. But he who runs may see that the phenomenal mass awakening cannot have

taken place without the masses having added considerably to their stature. This recital has not been made to claim credit for myself. I am but an humble instrument in God's hands. Credit belongs to truth and non-violence. The writer's question seems to doubt the efficacy of truth and non-violence. The series of examples I have given ought to set at rest all doubt. If we were offering civil disobedience, it was for gaining swaraj; if now we have suspended it and are ready to join the R.T.C., other conditions being fulfilled, we shall be going to it for the same noble end. That we may fail to achieve the end is quite possible. Even so we shall be putting ourselves in the wrong, if we rejected the advance made by the Government. If we make the right use of suspension, if we carry out the terms of the settlement to the fullest extent possible, if we complete the two boycotts, if we intensify the khadi spirit, at the end of the period of grace, we shall find ourselves stronger for battle, if we have not by then already gained our end. We must work away with faith in the settlement leading us to our goal."

The terms of the settlement gave rise to heart-burnings and he patiently cleared his position. In the same issue of *Young India*, he explained why he stood for protection of Indian industries. "There should be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies, trading in India and the rights of the Indian subjects," said some industrialists who had a talk with him in Bombay. "The formula reads innocent enough but it covers the most dangerous position," wrote Gandhi.

"The situation today is this. The Britisher is the top dog and the Indian the underdog in his own country. In the administration of the country, the Indian generally is a mere clerk. In business he is at best a commission agent getting 5 per cent, against his English principal's 95 per cent. In almost every walk of life the Englishman by reason of his belonging to the ruling class occupies a privileged position. It can be said without fear of contradiction and without exaggeration that he has risen upon the ruin of India's commerce and industries. The cottage industry of India had to perish in order that Lancashire might flourish. Indian shipping had to perish so that British shipping might flourish. In a word we were suppressed in order to enable the British to live on the heights of Simla. It was not a mere picturesque expression of Gokhale's, when he said that our growth was stunted. To talk then of no discrimination between

Indian interests and English or European is to perpetuate Indian helotage. What is equality of rights between a giant and a dwarf? Before one can think of equality between unequals, the dwarf must be raised to the height of the giant. And since millions living on the plains cannot be translated to the heights of Simla, it follows that those entrenched in those heights must descend to the plains. The process may seem harsh but it is inevitable, if the millions of the plains are to be equals of the privileged few.

"It is to be feared, therefore, that before we reach the state of equality, the levelling process will have to be gone through. Justice demands this. It will be a misnomer to call the process one of racial discrimination. There is no such question. There is room enough in our country for every British man and woman if they will shed their privileged position and share our lot. They must then exchange the British army and the force of the cities for the goodwill of a whole nation, which is at their disposal for the asking. Our goodwill is the truest safeguard that we can offer to them and it will be infinitely better and more dignified for both of us. In the process, there will be apparent discrimination felt everywhere. It need not be felt by those who realize that the present is a wrong, unnatural position. To show that no racial discrimination is involved in this demand one has only to state that the Indians who occupy entrenched positions behind their British patrons will also be expected to come to the level of their brethren of the plains. The true formula, therefore, should be this. In order to remove the existing unnatural inequalities the privileges of the ruling class and those others who have shared them shall be reduced so as to reach a state of equality between all classes and communities.

"On the Indian side it must be a point of honour with us to hold British lives and honour as sacred as our own. This does not, need not, mean the ruin of British trade or interest. Those who are resident can rely on their disciplined habits, trained intellect, industry and powers of organization to carve out for themselves careers of distinction all the while serving the country of their adoption with the loyalty they have tendered to their own motherland.

"British trade, where it is not hurtful to India's interest, can be placed, when we reach a real state of honourable association, on a favoured basis. And an India free from exploitation from within and without must prosper with astonishing rapidity. With growing

prosperity, her wants must grow. With her growing wants, must grow also her imports. If at that time Britain is a partner or ally, she may well become India's chief supplier.

"That is a dream I should love to realize. I have been a party to settlement for the realization of that dream. I seek every Englishman's help to enable India to gain that end. My notion of Purna Swaraj is not isolated independence, but healthy and dignified independence. My nationalism, fierce though it is, is not exclusive, is not devised to harm any nation or individual. Legal maxims are not so legal as they are moral. I do believe in the eternal truth of 'sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas.'"

He went to Delhi for an interview with Lord Irwin on March 19. He discussed with the Viceroy the question of political prisoners and other matters requiring urgent attention. In the interest of good relations and peaceful atmosphere, he pleaded once again for commutation of the death sentences on Bhagat Singh and his comrades. Lord Irwin remained adamant. "As I listened the other day to Mr. Gandhi putting the case for commutation forcibly before me," the Viceroy said in his farewell speech, "I reflected first on what significance it surely was that the apostle of non-violence should so earnestly be pleading the cause of the devotees of a creed fundamentally opposite to his own, but I should regard it as wholly wrong to allow my judgement on these matters to be influenced or deflected by purely political considerations. I could imagine no case in which under the land penalty had been more directly deserved."

In the early hours of March 23, Gandhi wrote a letter appealing to the charity of Lord Irwin, "a great Christian". He pleaded in vain. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajaguru were hanged in the night of March 23 in the Lahore jail. Hurriedly their bodies were cremated on the banks of Sutlej and their remains were thrown in the river. The news was received with intense indignation. "The corpse of Bhagat Singh shall stand between us and England," said Nehru. Gandhi felt that the sudden execution under such circumstances was cutting the very ground underneath his feet, however technically unconcerned it might be with the terms of the truce. The nation's duty, he said, was clear:

"The Congress must not swerve from the path chalked out for it. Notwithstanding the gravest provocation, the Congress should endorse the settlement and test its capacity to yield the result

hoped for. We must not put ourselves in the wrong by being angry. Let us recognize that commutation of the sentences was no part of the truce. We may accuse the Government of goondaism, but we may not accuse them of breach of the settlement.

"In my deliberate opinion, the grave blunder committed by the Government has increased our power for winning the freedom for which Bhagat Singh and his comrades have died. Let us not fritter away the opportunity by being betrayed into any angry action. Universal hartal is a foregone conclusion. And no better mark of respect can be paid to the memory of the deceased patriots than by having absolutely silent and respectful processions. Let the event be one of self-purification and greater dedication to the service of the country."

Karachi Congress

1931

THE CRY, "Bhagat Singh Zindabad", resounded throughout India. March 24, 1931 was observed as the day of mourning. In Lahore the authorities warned European women to keep for ten days within the European quarters. In Bombay and Madras, there were angry demonstrations. Armed flying squads patrolled in Calcutta. The demonstrators came in clash with the police, in which 141 people were killed, 586 wounded and 341 arrested. The emotions outside the Congress fold were also intense. On March 25, while crucial discussion on the Finance Bill was in progress a large number of members including Abdur Rahim and Cowasji Jehangir walked out of the assembly as a protest against the executions.

At Karachi, on the day when the executions were carried out, the delegates for the plenary session of the Congress were already assembling, and during the next few days the atmosphere was very tense. On March 25 the memory of Bhagat Singh was marred by communal rioting in Cawnpore, and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, a prominent Congress leader, was done to death while attempting to stop the riots. "His blood," said Gandhi, "is the cement that will ultimately bind the two communities. No pact will bind our hearts. But heroism, such as Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi showed is bound to melt the stoniest hearts, melt them into one. The poison has, however, gone so deep that blood even of a man so great, so self-sacrificing and so utterly brave as Vidyarthi may today not be enough to wash us of it. Let this noble example stimulate us all to similar effort should the occasion arise again."

The atmosphere in the country was surcharged with emotion. A large number of young men had arrived in Karachi from the Punjab and elsewhere. The truce, though welcomed by the great majority, was not popular, and there was a definite fear that it might lead the Congress to all manner of compromising situations. As Gandhi

approached Karachi station, the members of Navajawan Sabha in red shirts shouted: "Gandhi go back", "Down with Gandhism," "Gandhi's truce has sent Bhagat Singh to the gallows." And they shouted "Long live Bhagat Singh". Far from being angered by the slogans, Gandhi had a good word to say for the young men. In a statement to the press, he said:

"Though they were incensed against me, they gave vent to their wrath in what I would call a most dignified manner. It was open to them to do physical injury but they refrained from doing so. It was open to them to insult me in many other ways, but they confined their resentment to handing me black-cloth flowers representing, I imagine, the ashes of the three patriots. I am only hoping that they will exercise the restraint that they did yesterday throughout the Congress session, for they know I am trying to reach the same goal with them. Only I am following a method wholly different from theirs. I have not a shadow of a doubt that as time goes they will discover the error of their ways. In this country of self-suppression and timidity, almost bordering on cowardice, we cannot have too much bravery, and too much self-sacrifice. One's head bends before Bhagat Singh's bravery and sacrifice. But I want the greater bravery, if I might say so without offending my young friends, of the meek, the gentle and the non-violent, the bravery that will mount the gallows without injuring or harbouring any thought of injury to a single soul."

A few representatives of Navajawan Sabha waited in deputation on Gandhi and had a heart-to-heart talk with him. They explained that it was not their intention to do any physical harm to him, that his life was as dear to them as to any one else, and that individual terrorism was not their creed. They were adamant in their quarrel with the truce, which they believed could never lead them to their goal of Workers' and Peasants' Free Republic in India. "But my dear young men," he said, "go and see Bihar and you will find a workers' and peasants' republic working there. Where there was fear and slavery ten years ago, there is courage, bravery and resistance to wrong. If you want capital to be extinct or you want to abolish monied men or the capitalists, you will never succeed. What you must do is to demonstrate to the capitalists the power of labour and they will consent to be the trustees of those who toil for them. I do not want anything more for workers and peasants than enough

to eat, house and clothe themselves, and live in ordinary comfort as self-respecting human beings. After that condition of things is brought about, the brainiest among them will certainly manage to acquire more wealth than the rest. But I have told you what I want. I want the rich to hold their riches in trust for the poor, or to give them up for them. Do you know that I gave up all my property when I founded Tolstoy Farm? Ruskin's *Unto this Last* inspired me, and I built my farm on those lines. You will now recognize that I am, a foundation member of your peasants' and workers' republic. And what do you prize more—wealth or work? Supposing you were to be stranded in the desert of Sahara with cart-loads of money, how would it help you? But if you can work you may not have to go hungry. How then is wealth to be preferred to work? Go and see for yourselves the labour union of Ahmedabad at work and mark how they are trying to establish a republic of their own."

But the iron had gone into their souls: "Punjab is goonda raj, Mahatmaji. Where do you find the change of heart?" Gandhi remarked: "But I never said that there had been a change of heart on the part of the Government."

"Why then did you give such a certificate to Lord Irwin?"

Smilingly Gandhi turned to them and said: "Just as I have given a certificate to you. I have admired your self-restraint, though I disapprove of your action against me. In the same way I was struck with Lord Irwin's frankness, sincerity and friendliness and I paid a tribute to it. That was nothing unusual for me. There was no question of a change of heart. The truce I had never regarded as an indication of change of heart, and so the executions did not alter the position. But I should certainly have given Government credit for change of heart, if they had commuted the sentences."

It was feared that angry demonstrators would make it impossible for the Congress to go on. It was left to Gandhi to pacify them. The first speech in the Congress pandal was delivered by him to the audience of 50,000, on March 26. The canopy of sky, under which the Congress was meeting for the first time lent a special charm. He said: "We are accustomed to think of heaven as the Kingdom of God. We imagine that He sends us His message and commands from above and we thus establish communion with Him. Until now we had a screen between God and us. I am thankful that the reception committee has rent it asunder and put us into

the direct communion with God. Let us not by allowing impurities to creep in create a fresh screen, and let us commence our business with this communion as our valuable asset. We have chosen for our march towards freedom the ancient path of truth and nonviolence, and we must let God's covenant, that those who tread on the straight and narrow path shall never come to grief, inspire us with faith and hope."

Referring to the executions, he said: "By these executions, the Government have given the nation grave cause for provocation. It has shocked me too, inasmuch as my negotiations and talks had made me entertain a distant hope that Bhagat Singh, Rajaguru and Sukhdev might be saved. I am not surprised that young men are angry with me for not having been able to save them. But I have no reason to be angry with them. This is not the first occasion of its kind in my life. It is the duty of a genuine servant not to be angry with his masters. Anger ought to be taboo with him. But if he cannot help being angry, he must abdicate his function as servant of humanity. I do not want to do so and, therefore, I said they had a right to be angry, not I. But I must tell them I had been serving the peasants and workers long before they were born. I have lived amongst them, and cast my lot with them. Ever since I took the pledge of service, I have dedicated my head to humanity. It is the easiest thing in the world to chop off my head, as it does not take the slightest preparation or organization. Outside protection I have never sought. In fact, it is futile to think of protecting me, for I know that God is the only protector. Having said this, let me declare that the demonstrations of yesterday far from making me angry delighted me, inasmuch as there was no discourtesy about them. They might have laid hands on me; instead, they formed my bodyguard and escorted me to my car. I must confess that when I saw them, I felt that my experiences in South Africa, where I was mobbed and assaulted, were going to be repeated.

"But there was no cause for apprehension. The young men were simply shouting, 'Gandhi go back,' 'Down with Gandhism'. They had every right to do so, inasmuch as they thought that I had not done everything in my power to save Bhagat Singh, or, that being a believer in ahimsa, I had simply neglected Bhagat Singh and his comrades. But they had no intention to molest me or any one else. They allowed every one to pass and then a young man

handed to me flowers made of black cloth. They might have thrown them on me, insulted me, but they had no such intention. Flowers are given me everywhere, and I am usually indifferent about them, even when they are received from dear sisters, and sometimes even chide them for wasting flowers on me. But these I seized and have treasured them. If they come and tell me that they should not have been angry and that their suspicions about me were groundless and that, therefore, they want the flowers returned to them, I shall gladly give them back. But if they do not do so, they will be sent to the ashram to be preserved as heirlooms.

"The young men wanted to proclaim to the world that, however great the mahatma may be, they were sure that he was doing harm to India. I think they had a right to expose me, if they felt that I was betraying the country. I want you to understand my attitude. I cannot but behave otherwise with these young men inasmuch as I want to win them over by love. Having flung aside the sword, there is nothing except the cup of love which I can offer to those who oppose me. It is by offering that cup that I expect to draw them close to me. I cannot think of permanent enmity between man and man, and believing as I do in the theory of rebirth, I live in the hope that if not in this birth, in some other birth I shall be able to hug all humanity in friendly embrace.

"I have dwelt at length on this little episode, in order that you may not think ill of the young men. Do not seek to protect me. The Most High is always there to protect us all. You may be sure that when my time is up, no one, not even the most renowned physician in the world, can stand between Him and me.

"And now a message for the young men. If you want my service, do not disown me; come and understand everything from me. You must know that it is against my creed to punish even a murderer, a thief or a dacoit. There can be, therefore, no excuse for suspicion that I did not want to save Bhagat Singh. But I want you also to realize Bhagat Singh's error. If I had an opportunity of speaking to Bhagat Singh and his comrades, I should have told them that the way they pursued was wrong and futile. I declare that we cannot win swaraj for our famishing millions, for our deaf and dumb, for our lame and crippled, by the way of the sword. With God as witness I want to proclaim this truth that the way of violence cannot bring swaraj, it can only lead to disaster. I wish to tell these young

men with all the authority with which a father can speak to his children, that the way of violence can only lead to perdition. I shall explain to you why. Do you think that all the women and children who covered themselves with glory during the last struggle would have done so if we had pursued the path of violence? Would they have been here today? Would our women known as the meekest on earth done the unique service they did if we had violence in us? And our children—our Vanar Sena. How could you have had these innocent ones, who renounced their toys, their kites and their crackers and joined as soldiers of swaraj—how could you have enlisted them in a violent struggle? We were able to enlist as soldiers millions of men, women and children because we were pledged to non-violence. I beseech the young men to have patience and self-control. Anger cannot take us forward. We need not consider the Englishmen as our enemies. I have used satyagraha against them but never thought of them as enemies. I want to convert them and the only way is the way of love. Rowdy demonstrations cannot help us. Could they call Bhagat Singh back to life? They can only retard the advent of swaraj. I agree that the Government has given sufficient cause for provocation, but I want the impatient youth, in the name of God, in the name of our motherland, to throw themselves heart and soul in the non-violent struggle. I ask them to trust my unbroken experience of forty years of the practice of non-violence.

"But if they will not, they might kill me but they cannot kill Gandhism. If truth can be killed, Gandhism can be killed. For what is Gandhism but winning swaraj by means of truth and non-violence? Will the young men refuse swaraj attained through truth and non-violence? I ask them not to mar the wonderful work done by the workers of Sind. The workers have in three weeks created this Congress Nagar, so that swaraj for the peasant, the labourer, the scavenger—all of whom have worked in creating this city of huts—the lame and the blind, the starving and the well-fed, the wretch and the poor, may soon be a living reality. I beseech you not to mar the beautiful work they have done.

"This leads me to the sad events in Cawnpore which has been a scene of carnage. This is due to the violence we had harboured against one another. It is the handwriting on the wall. Though we have shown ourselves capable of limited non-violence, we have

harboured violence in our hearts, and we have been guilty of using coercion. The papers allege that in Cawnpore, Hindus went mad over Bhagat Singh's martyrdom and started with intimidating the Musalmans who would not close their shops in his honour. And you know the sequel. I am quite sure that if the spirit of Bhagat Singh is watching what is happening in Cawnpore, he would feel deeply humiliated and ashamed. I say this for I have heard him described as a man of honour. And what havoc we have done! Women insulted, children done to death. Let it be recognized that both Hindus and Musalmans had lost their senses. They were all children of the soil, children of our common motherland.

"I have felt deeply ashamed of these deeds of blood, and to whoever my voice may reach I wish to declare that such things may any day prove more than I can bear. How can we, with the Hindus and Musalmans slaughtering one another, continue to assert that we have been non-violent? How can I, a votary of truth, hug the belief that we as a nation are non-violent if the mischief spreads? If I did so, I would be untrue to myself and to God. With carnage going on about me, I cannot bear to live unconcerned. Let me declare that as soon as I feel that life is unbearable, I should hope to have the courage to fast myself to death rather than witness these blood feuds. You know that I can't bear denial of pledges solemnly and voluntarily taken. I would sooner be dead than see the merchants and others break their pledged word than see those calling themselves Congressmen and swearing by the creed of the Congress break it in their hearts or openly. If I can witness this contradiction with equanimity, with what face can I stand before the world and my Maker? He will tell me I have been living a life of falsehood, a life of sham and fraud. I may not deceive myself and the world. Every moment of my existence is dedicated to the winning of swaraj by means of truth and non-violence.

"I know you will say that that sort of thing has been going on all these years, and I have done nothing to stop it. Penances with me are no mechanical acts. They are done in obedience to the inner voice. I am telling you what had been going on within me all these days. The crisis may never come, either because I am unnecessarily agitated, or because I have lost courage to face reality. I must be true to God, and the moment I feel that life is insupportable for me, I hope not to be found wanting. What better reparation can I do

than willing surrender of the body that had ceased to evoke response and may be a hindrance to the discovery of the true way?"

As he was about to close, Gandhi was asked as to what he did to save Bhagat Singh. "I was not on my defence," he answered "and so I did not bother you with the details of what I did to save Bhagat Singh and his comrades. I pleaded with the Viceroy as best I could. I brought all the persuasion at my command to bear on him. On the day fixed for the final interview with Bhagat Singh's relations I wrote a letter to the Viceroy on the morning of 23rd. I poured my whole soul into it, but to no avail. I might have done one thing more, you say. I might have made the commutation a term of the settlement. It could not be so made. And to threaten withdrawal would be a breach of faith. The Working Committee had agreed with me in not making commutation a condition precedent to truce. I could only mention it apart from the settlement. I had hoped for magnanimity. My hope was not to materialize. But that can be no ground for breaking the settlement.

"And it was not I alone who did what was humanly possible. Pandit Malaviya and Dr. Sapru tried their best. But why should failure worry us? Success is in God's hands. Our failure should spur us to greater effort. That effort lies in being true to ourselves, in Hindus and Musalmans determining to live as brothers in heart unity, in merchants and others keeping their voluntary pledges, in workers eschewing violence in thought, word and deed. May God help us to mend our ways. May He help us to be strong enough to be true to ourselves and to Him."

The Karachi session was significant. In view of the abnormal times, the ordinary machinery of the election of president was suspended, and Sardar Patel was chosen for the post. The time for holding the session was shifted from December to March, in view of the convenience of the poor who now flocked in ever increasing numbers to the Congress. "It was necessary," said Gandhi, "to break the spell that December had cast over the Congressmen. It was originally chosen for the sake of lawyers and others."

The session was held on March 29 in an open-air stadium, packed with delegates numbering 3,200 and several thousands of visitors. It attracted a strong contingent of Red Shirts from the Frontier Province led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. At six in the evening, the president-elect, Sardar Patel, came to the pandal followed by

the Red Shirts playing their drums and wind instruments. In the procession were Gandhi, other members of the Working Committee, and Subhas Bose, the leader of the Navajawan Sabha.

"The Congress represents and exists for the millions," was the refrain of the Sardar's address. Three resolutions were moved from the chair and passed. The first was of condolence on the death of Motilal Nehru, Mahomed Ali and other "heroes and heroines". The second was on Cawnpore riots and the third urged the release of all political prisoners. Jawaharlal then moved the resolution on Bhagat Singh and his comrades, which was drafted by Gandhi: "This Congress, while dissociating itself from and disapproving of political violence in any shape or form, places on record its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, and his comrades, Sukhadev and Rajaguru, and mourns with the bereaved families the loss of these lives. This Congress is of opinion that Government have lost the golden opportunity of promoting goodwill between the two nations, admittedly held to be essential at this juncture, and of winning over to the method of peace the party which, being driven to despair, resorts to political violence."

Nehru said: "We would have wished that the author of the resolution who has inaugurated in history a unique movement should have moved the resolution on Bhagat Singh who diametrically differed from him in his methods. But it is physically impossible. For every little thing we have had to seek his help, for every resolution we have had to trouble him for a draft with the result that his day and night in Karachi have been one long day and he has not had a moment of rest." He asked the audience why was the apostle of non-violence anxious to pay the highest tribute to Bhagat Singh, although hundreds lost their lives in Peshawar, Sholapur, Bombay and elsewhere? The reason, he said, was that in Bhagat Singh self-sacrifice and bravery had passed the upper limits. But in honouring him, they must not forget the path of non-violence they had chalked out for themselves. He was not ashamed of the cult of violence, but he felt that the cult for the present could not be practised in the best interests of the country and there was the fear of indulging in communal strife when once the sword was unsheathed. If they were to make mistakes, it should be on the side of right, and that was why the resolution dissociated the Congress from violence. He said that the country for the present was under conditions of

truce, and they did not know if there would be real peace in the country. They must have to take up the struggle once again, for which purpose they must always be ready. They did not know how many Bhagat Singhs they might have to sacrifice before India was free. The lesson which they should learn from Bhagat Singh was to die in a manly and bold manner so that the country may live. The resolution was passed without much opposition.

The main resolution dealt with the truce and the Round Table Conference: "This Congress, having considered the provisional settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it, and desires to make it clear, that the Congress goal of Purna Swaraj remains still intact. In the event of the way being otherwise open to the Congress to be represented at any conference with the representatives of the British Government, the Congress delegation will work for this object, and in particular, so as to give the nation control over the army, external affairs, finance and fiscal and economic policy and to have scrutiny, by an impartial tribunal, of the financial transactions of the British Government in India, and to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England, and the right to either party to end the partnership at will provided, however, that the Congress delegation will be free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interest of India." It further said: "The Congress authorizes Mahatma Gandhi to represent it at the conference with the addition of such other delegates as the Working Committee may appoint to act under his leadership."

Jawaharlal Nehru, in moving the resolution, tried to lay before the house what his feelings were and why he had whole-heartedly accepted it, and pleaded with them to accept it. "One thing is certain," he said, "that we cannot afford to be here or there and do two things at the same time. For this, I implore you to decide once for all. So far we have decided to abide by Gandhiji, and let us do so until we see the way blocked for further progress."

Jamnadas Mehta opposed the resolution on the ground that it toned down the Lahore resolution. "You cannot eat your cake and have it too," he remarked. "You cannot go to the Round Table Conference hedged in with conditions and make the world believe that you are still sticking to independence." Among those who supported the resolution was Khan Ghaffar Khan. He said that

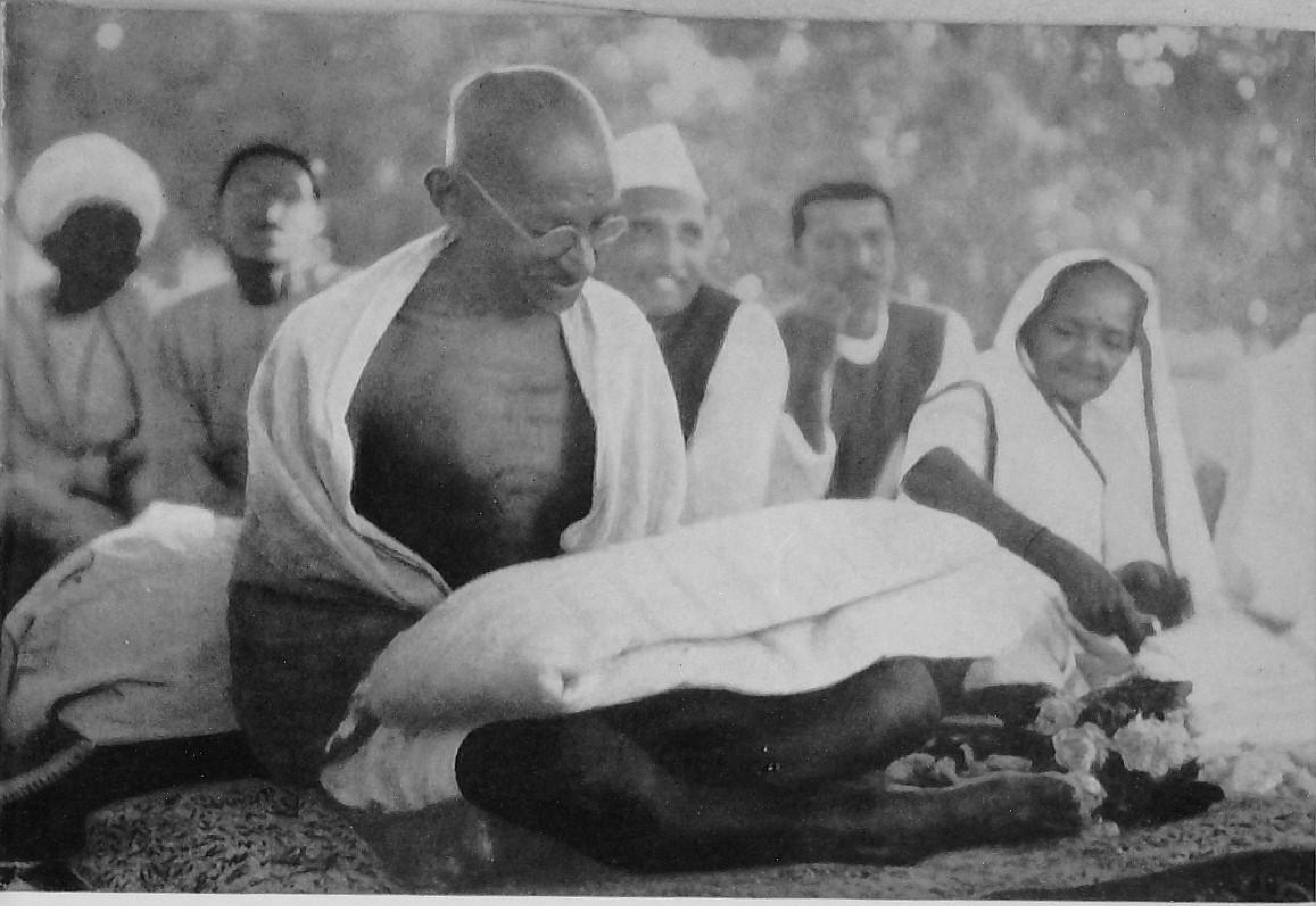
he was ill, but he could not disobey the command of Mahatmaji. He was only a soldier. When a commander asked what he knew, he replied that he knew only how to obey. The Pathans had great faith in Gandhi and it was only he who made them friends with the Indians and India.

Gandhi followed Ghaffar Khan. He spoke both in English and Hindi. Speaking in English, he said:

"Although the resolution before you is very brief, I venture to suggest to you that it is very comprehensive and capable of passing the most rigorous test that a man who believes in complete independence can exact. The resolution makes it incumbent upon any delegation that may take part in the conference deliberations to bear in mind the Congress goal, or as it is called the Congress objective of Purna Swaraj, as stated in the Lahore resolution, and not in the Madras resolution which was a pious wish. Purna Swaraj is not a pious wish today. Purna Swaraj is the incessant yearning of the soul of the nation which is impatient to get it, and its impatience was demonstrated during the past twelve months. And so it is the immediate objective that the delegation has got to keep in view in agreeing to any single thing that may happen in the conference. But that is not all. Some idea or some inkling of Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence has also been indicated here as essential, and so it is incumbent upon your delegation to obtain control over the defence forces, etc.

"But the trap—or sting as you would call it—is in the tail of the resolution: 'Provided, however, the Congress delegation would be free to accept such adjustments as may be necessary in the interests of India.' Now in this there is a trap and there is no trap. There is no trap, if you will choose your delegation well and trust it. There is trap because 'adjustments' is really synonymous with 'safeguards'. The principle of safeguards is accepted in the terms of the settlement, but the safeguards that might be accepted have to be in the interests of India, and they must be demonstrably necessary, not merely absolutely necessary as it had been suggested in one of the many amendments. 'Demonstrably', for our purpose, is a superior word to 'absolutely'.

"Having said this, I want to say about another amendment too that has been suggested, that whatever action the delegates may take should be subject to ratification by a special session of the



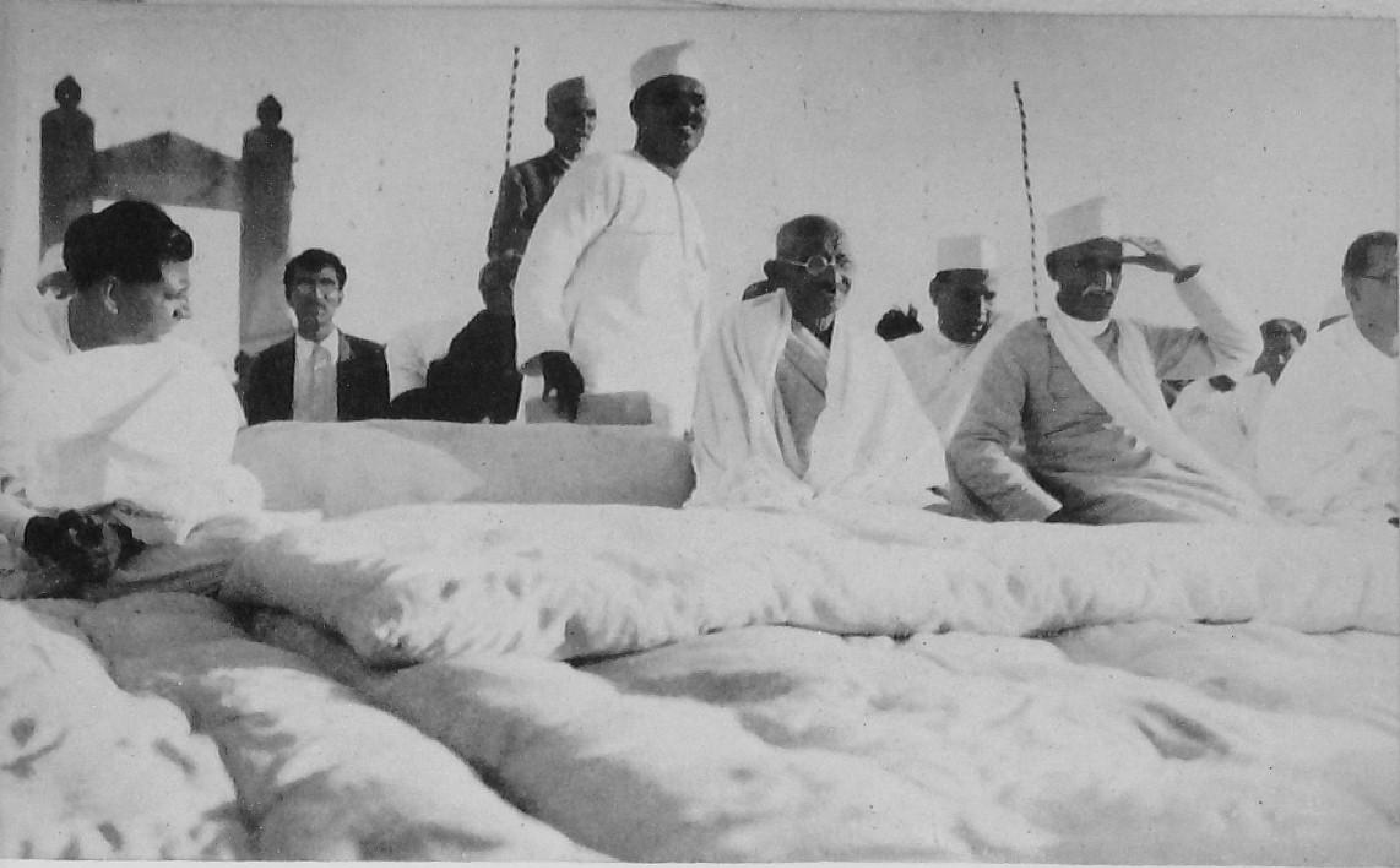
Courtesy : Balvant Bhatt

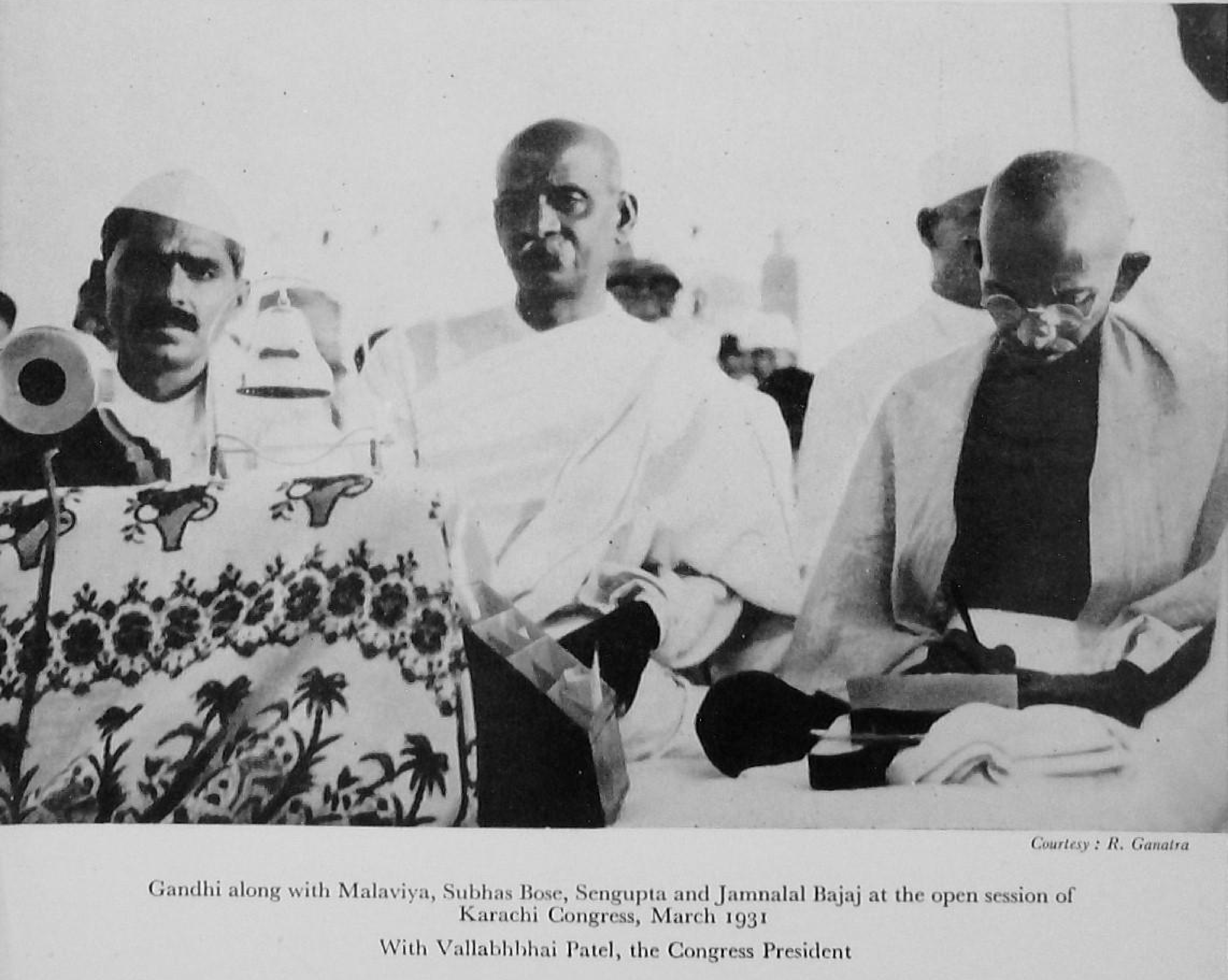
Gandhi receiving a present of a khadi piece, Ahmedabad, March 1931

Citizens' meeting on the sands of Sabarmati where Gandhi was presented with an address and a purse of Rs. 70,000, March 10, 1931

Courtesy: R. Ganatra

Gandhi on his early morning walk, Karachi, March 1931





Courtesy : R. Ganatra

Gandhi along with Malaviya, Subhas Bose, Sengupta and Jamnalal Bajaj at the open session of Karachi Congress, March 1931

With Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress President

Courtesy: Balvant Bhatt

Gandhi listening to a devotional song during the Congress session at Karachi, March 1931

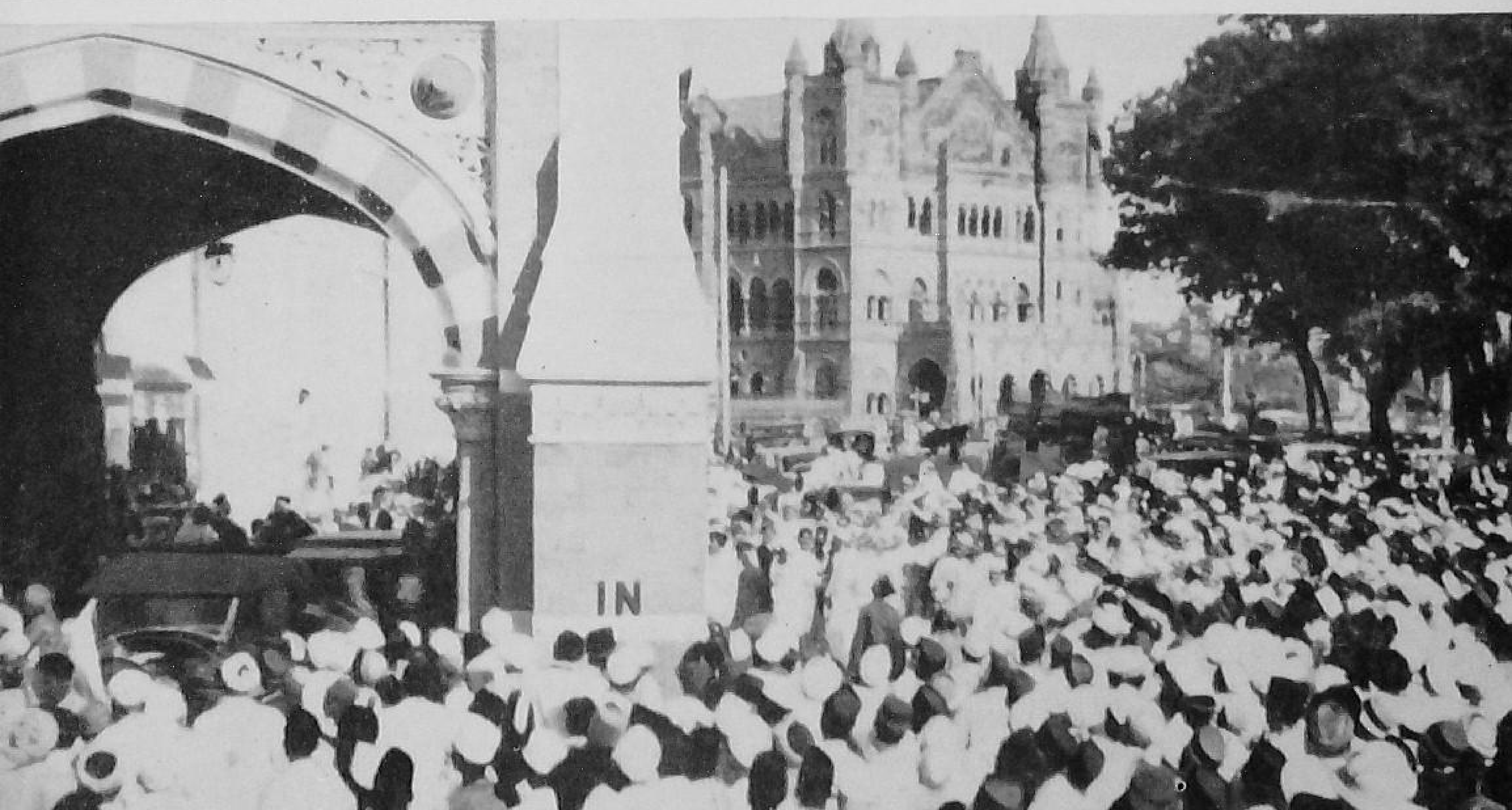
Leaving the dais for the rostrum

Courtesy : R. Ganatra

Gandhi addressing the open session of the Karachi Congress from a specially erected rostrum, March 1931

Courtesy : R. Ganatra

Gandhi with Jawaharlal at the Karachi Congress



Courtesy : Mayor of Bombay

Gandhi replying to the civic address at the Bombay Municipal Corporation Hall, April 18, 1931
Crowds listening to Gandhi's speech from outside the Bombay Municipal Corporation building

Courtesy : Kalyanjibhai

Gandhi laying the foundation-stone of the Kasturba Sevashram, Maroli, Surat district, June 12, 1931

Congress or by the All-India Congress Committee. I venture to suggest to you with all the force at my command, that this is not only unnecessary but unbecoming of a Congress that has lived progressively for forty-five years and has acquired a prestige now acquired by it throughout the world. Surely this Congress is not so poor as not to be able to produce representatives who can fully represent the Congress at any conference or any assembly. Therefore, if you send your delegation, that delegation should have the same powers as if the whole Congress was being transported to the conference. Without that, matters such as those that confront us cannot be adjusted, and we will be one among many parties. Those who go to the conference are expected to have full credentials and authority to bind their principals. But if they go there and have to say, 'We have come here, we will discuss; but we cannot bind our principals, we shall have to refer to our principals,' the procedure becomes interminable, cumbrous and wholly ineffective for the purpose in view. Hence it is absolutely necessary not to put any such proviso as has been suggested.

"What is the position of the Congress *inter se*? What is the position of the Congress with reference to the intermediate bodies, the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee? Although the committees are given a general power of attorney to act for the Congress, still the right of repudiation is a right of which the Congress can never divest itself. No organization or no principal can divest himself of this right. The power of attorney to be given to your delegation is to act within the four corners of this resolution. So long as the delegation acts within the four corners of this power of attorney, it would be improper for you to repudiate them. If they go beyond this resolution, you have every right to repudiate them. That is one thing. But the more effective repudiation comes into play when they have turned traitors and have sold your cause, or when they have become so idiotic, so unintelligent as not to be able to see the many traps that might have been laid for them and thus fall into one of these traps. Even then they would have gone outside the four corners of their power of attorney. In that case, you have right to repudiate all that they may have done, and that power is good against the whole world. The power of repudiation is absolute, if your agents act outside the power that you give them. You may take it from me that this is the legal

position, if I may so call it. Hence I suggest to you that it is not only superfluous, not only unnecessary, for you to attach the condition of ratification to this resolution, it is unbecoming of you to do so. It will hamper the progress of the very thing you want them to do. Therefore, I hope, you will without entering upon any further discussion, withdraw this particular amendment.

"I would next suggest to you, if you will follow the warning I have uttered from this platform so often, that having brought into being your Working Committee, you should not thoughtlessly or hastily interfere with the build of the resolution that the Working Committee may place before you, because you should give the credit to the Working Committee for having examined all the pros and cons, all the objections that might possibly be raised against the several parts of the resolution. It will really be like interfering with the creation of your own architects. But you can do one thing, that is to exercise the precious right which you possess, namely, the right of total rejection of this resolution. Although the thing itself is a completed whole, and you may not, therefore, interfere with it in detail, still you have the right of totally rejecting it. I would, therefore, urge you, that if you really feel that the resolution does not satisfy you as a whole, you will marshall all your forces, and intellect, and your resourcefulness in a full-dress debate and reject it totally. The choice before you is either to reject or accept the resolution as it stands, because it is a resolution framed by your trusted representatives after many an anxious hours of thought, which you could never give to this resolution; for one thing you have not the leisure for it, nor can such a large body of people give one mind to a resolution of this character. So far as the body of this resolution is concerned, tear it to pieces if you like, examine it as mercilessly as you please, and then if you come to the conclusion that after all it is not in the interest of the nation, then destroy it. But if you feel that the nation cannot lose but will gain by endorsing the settlement, you must say so boldly and act up to it. Endorsement means an honest endeavour to act up to it cent per cent. I do not want you to accept it in niggardly or half-hearted spirit, or because it is a mahatma who is behind it, or because the Working Committee is behind it. You, as representatives of the nation, will not lose in dignity or in the estimation of the world, if you, after the fullest deliberation, come to the

conclusion that it should be rejected, because this settlement is, in your opinion, not worth considering and that it is really a trap laid for the people. It will then be your duty to reject it.

"But do not for heaven's sake, let the recent executions be an obsession in your way. We shall have provocations in our march towards the goal, in our march towards the conference. Let no provocation deflect you from the right course. Let no provocation blind your judgement. Use your intellect in an absolutely unbiased manner. Examine the truce on its own merits. Do not be carried away also by the fact that all the prisoners covered by the truce or the provisional settlement have not yet been discharged. Let not that worry you. It is up to the Working Committee to see that all those who are covered by the truce are discharged. If a single prisoner covered by the truce remains in prison, it must be a point of honour with the committee to repudiate the truce. Therefore, you must not be turned away from your course by any side issues. What you should concentrate upon is this: What does the settlement amount to? What scope does the settlement give the Congress to assert its claim? What scope is there in this resolution for the delegation, even unconsciously to go beyond the authority it confers on them? If you find it is not sufficiently comprehensive to tie down the hands of the delegation, no matter how clever it may be, you have every right to reject the resolution."

Speaking in Hindi, he elucidated the position of the princes in federation: "The princes are naturally touchy, and we should do nothing to touch them on the raw, if we can help it. We may make it clear to them that a federation of the people and princes will have meaning only when the princes will stoop to conquer, stoop to the level of their people, just as we ask the Englishmen to descend from the heights of Simla to the plains. But we do not want to give them any notice of this. We will trust them to conform to the spirit of the times, and I am sure that if we succeed in getting everything else, the princes will offer no difficulty."

He also referred to an important reservation in the resolution, namely, "in the event of the way being otherwise open": "Supposing we do not arrive at any settlement whatever over this delicate question of Hindu-Muslim unity, what is to be the position of the Congress? So far as I can see at the present moment, it will be useless for the Congress delegation to take part in the conference

if we cannot possibly arrive at a proper communal solution. But I am not able just now to give you my final decision or final opinion. I do not know. Many things may happen, which may make it necessary or highly desirable that the delegation should take part in the conference. But that is for the future really to decide."

Towards the conclusion he gave a warning:

"If the Congress rejects the settlement summarily, nothing can possibly be said against the Congress. The Congress is a paramount authority. The Working Committee is its creature. The action taken by the Working Committee, or taken by myself, may not commend itself to you. There should be, therefore, no question of toleration or patronage. It is open to every one of you to reject the resolution and to repudiate the settlement if you wish to. But if you endorse the settlement, then it is your duty actively to support it, carry out all its items faithfully and honourably and do the various things that are set out before you in the resolution, so that you daily increase the power of the Congress and make it possible for the Congress delegation to vindicate the position of the Congress and possibly to bring the very thing for which you have suffered for the last twelve months.

"One thing more. If this delegation goes as far as the conference, it does not mean that the delegation will bring in its pocket Purna Swaraj. If it does not bring Purna Swaraj, it does not mean that it returns humiliated. Nothing of the kind. All that we expect to be able to do is to go and tell the British people and British Minister what we want, and if we do not get what the Congress expects the delegation to accept within the terms of the resolution, we are bound to return empty-handed and receive your compliments, not curses. You will be entitled to give us curses if we return having sold the interests of the country. That is what you have a perfect right to do. But it will not be proper for you to say, 'You were not able to fulfil your promises.' No promise has ever been made. No promise is being made now that if the deputation goes to the conference, whether here or in England, or enters upon further negotiations, that deputation is going to bring Purna Swaraj. Purna Swaraj will come when the full authority of the Congress has been manifested and not a minute before. It will be the greatest achievement of the Congress to bring swaraj if it does. All that I promise faithfully to you on my behalf, and on behalf of any

delegation that you might wish to send with me, is that we shall not be disloyal to the Congress in any shape or form."

In his Hindi speech he dealt with the objections and criticisms of some of the opponents:

"It is quite right for you to question why we who have all along distrusted the Round Table Conference should now decide to go to it. What miracle has happened to make us change our course? No such miracle has happened, and I have not much confidence in our getting what we want at the Round Table Conference. And I have often wondered myself what we are going to do at the conference when we know that there is such a gulf between what we want and what has been as yet offered at the conference. But consideration of the duty of a satyagrahi decided me. There comes a stage when he may no longer refuse to negotiate with his opponent. His object is always to convert his opponent by love. The stage of negotiation arrived when the Working Committee was released after the Premier's declaration. The Viceroy also made an appeal to us to lay down arms and to indicate what we want. It was open to us either to commit some act of civil disobedience and go back to jail as soon as we were released, or to take some step in response to the offer of peace. If we had taken the former course we would have been wrong in the eyes of the whole world.

"Again it was hardly proper for Govindanand to say that we need not have come to a settlement as we were ready to continue the struggle for one year more. Well, for that matter we might be capable of carrying on the struggle for twenty years, and a satyagrahi fights to the last, even if the rest are tired into submission. But the Working Committee did not enter the truce because the country was tired. A satyagrahi who lays down his arms because he is tired is untrue to his cause and to God. But the truce was made not because we were tired out, but because it was imperative. He who will fight on because he can fight on is no satyagrahi but a conceited person and guilty before God.

"You have threatened to oust us, if we return empty-handed. You may not do so because I make no promise to return with Purna Swaraj. I can only stick to the letter and spirit of the mandate. But it is open to you to oust us today, it is open to you to have another president and another Working Committee. We are your servants, we shall willingly make room for better men. But do

not endorse the truce because you feel that you cannot do without the 'mahatma'. If you cannot win swaraj without the 'mahatma' neither can you retain it. It is idle to think that the 'mahatma' is indispensable. Who carried on the struggle in my absence? You carried on not only after I was gone, but after all the principal workers were arrested. Do not, therefore, withdraw your protest because of the imagined indispensability of the 'mahatma'.

"But if you feel that I was right in making the truce and deserve your support, I request you to give me not half-hearted but whole-hearted support. You must know that your delegation cannot be so stupid as to forget the sacrifices and sufferings the nation has gone through. Rest assured that they will not sell the country."

Practically all the amendments were withdrawn and the resolution was passed without any alteration.

On the third day of the session, March 31, eight resolutions were moved and passed. They were on the civil disobedience sufferers, communal riots, prohibition, khaddar, peaceful picketing, Indians in South Africa, North-West Frontier Province, and changes in the constitution. Then came up a resolution on Burma which was moved by Maung Ji, a Burmese citizen. It recognized the right of the people of Burma to claim separation from India and to establish an independent state or to remain an autonomous partner in a free India with a right of separation at any time they may desire to exercise it.

Nehru moved the resolution on Government's forward policy in the Frontier Province. "For years past," he said, "the Afghans had been painted as savages who were out to murder and pillage and the moment the British Government were out of India there would be universal loot." He said that the Government had been intentionally raising the bogy in order to keep their control over India. Ghaffar Khan supporting the resolution said that times were gone when the British Government could keep India divided by the Afghan bogy. The Pathans today had full confidence in Gandhi and his methods. He assured the Congress that if in future they were to launch civil disobedience, the Pathans would not be found backward in helping India to win swaraj. "We will demonstrate what we are," he said. He made an appeal for communal unity and said that slaves had no religion and Hindus and Muslims should not quarrel over insignificant things. They would bring down the

whole prestige of India which they had won "under the banner of Gandhiji", if they continued communal strife. He said that the Government had been carrying on anti-Congress propaganda and were asking the Pathans what had they gained by the release of Gandhi which they had been demanding for the last twelve months and what he had done for them? Concluding his speech, Ghaffar Khan said that Gandhi alone could restore peace in the land of Pathans and thereby help in reducing the huge military expenditure. The resolution was unanimously passed.

The resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy had its origin in the early morning talks in Delhi between Gandhi and Nehru in February-March 1931. "I had referred to this matter, and he had welcomed the idea of having a resolution on economic matters," wrote Nehru later. "He asked me to bring the matter up at Karachi, and to draft the resolution and to show it to him there. I did so at Karachi, and he made various changes and suggestions. He wanted both of us to agree on the wording, before we asked the Working Committee to consider it. I had to make several drafts, and this delayed the matters for a few days. Ultimately Gandhiji and I agreed on a draft, which was placed before the Working Committee, and the Subjects Committee." The resolution said:

"This Congress is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what swaraj, as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress, therefore, declares that any constitution which may be agreed to on its behalf should provide or enable the swaraj government to provide for the following:

"1. Fundamental rights of the people, including: (i) Freedom of association and combination; (ii) Freedom of speech and of the press; (iii) Freedom of conscience and free profession and practice of religion, subject to public order and morality; (iv) Protection of the culture, language, and scripts of the minorities; (v) Equal rights and obligations of all citizens, without any bar on account of sex; (vi) No disability to attach to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste or creed or sex in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling; (vii) Equal rights to all citizens in regard to public roads,

wells, schools and other places of public resort; (viii) Right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf; (ix) No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with law.

"(2) Religious neutrality on the part of the state; (3) Adult suffrage; (4) Free primary education; (5) A living wage for industrial workers, limited hours of labour, healthy conditions of work, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment; (6) Labour to be freed from serfdom or the conditions bordering on serfdom; (7) Protection of women workers, and adequate provisions for leave during maternity period ; (8) Prohibition against employment of children of school-going age in the factories; (9) Right of labour to form unions to protect their interests with suitable machinery for settlement of disputes by arbitration; (10) Substantial reduction in agricultural rent or revenues paid by the peasantry, and in case of uneconomic holdings exemption from rent for such period as may be necessary, relief being given to small zamindars wherever necessary by reason of such reduction; (11) Imposition of a progressive tax on agricultural incomes above a fixed minimum; (12) A graduated inheritance tax; (13) Military expenditure to be reduced by at least one half of the present scale; (14) Expenditure and salaries in civil department to be largely reduced. And no servant of the state, other than specially employed experts and the like, to be paid above a certain fixed figure which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500 per month; (15) Protection of indigenous cloth by exclusion of all foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country; (16) Prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs; (17) No duty on salt manufactured in India; (18) Control over exchange and currency policy so as to help Indian industries and bring relief to the masses; (19) Control by the state of key industries and ownership of mineral resources; (20) Control of usury.

"It shall be open to the A.-I.C.C. to revise, amend or add to the foregoing so far as such revision, amendment or addition is not inconsistent with the policy and principles thereof."

After reading the resolution word by word Gandhi made a speech in Hindi:

"This resolution is meant for those who are no legislators, who are not interested in the intricate questions of constitution, and who

will not take an active part in the administration of the country. It is meant to indicate to the poor inarticulate Indians the broad features of swaraj or Ram Raj. Before my march to Dandi, I had included some of these features in my eleven points. These have been made more comprehensive. They are now presented to you in a separate resolution. They were advisedly omitted from the main resolution because that would have made the mandate for the delegation burdensome. But by passing this resolution we make it clear to the world and to our own people what we propose to do as soon as we come into power. Let Government also take note of it. Let those who may have to deal with us at the Round Table Conference also take note of the fact that the Viceroy, under swaraj, should not get more than Rs. 500 per month. The position has been made as clear as possible, in order that we may not be accused of having sprung sudden surprises on those who have to deal with us. They are also meant to forewarn all concerned. Let them prepare themselves for the coming legislation by modelling their lives in the light of the coming changes.

"I shall take a few instances. Clause IV of the fundamental rights protects the culture, language and scripts of the minority. Though I am sure that Islamic and Aryan cultures are not mutually exclusive and fundamentally different, I must recognize that Musalmans look upon Islamic culture as distinctive from Aryan. Let us, therefore, cultivate tolerance. Let us try to learn Urdu language and Urdu script and understand the Musalmans' insistence on it.

"Then there is the abolition of all disabilities attaching to women, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, etc. The moment this is done, many of the disabilities to which women are subjected will cease. So far as the Congress is concerned, we have admitted no such disability. We have had Mrs. Besant and Sarojini Devi as our presidents and in the future free state it will be open to us to have women presidents.

"Religious neutrality is one more important provision. Swaraj will favour Hinduism no more than Islam, nor Islam more than Hinduism. But in order that we may have a state based on the religious neutrality, let us from now adopt that principle in all our daily affairs. Let not a Hindu merchant hesitate to have deserving Muslims as his employees, and let every Congressman make religious neutrality his creed in every walk of life.

"Item number five deserves the immediate attention of all mill and factory owners who should anticipate human legislation foreshadowed in the clause.

"The last item relates to the control of usury. Islam prohibits the charging of interest, but there is no reason why usury should not be regarded as criminal in a Hindu society. The Pathans have forgotten the Islamic injunction, have followed our bad example and are known to charge from 200 to 300 per cent interest. I wish I could persuade Ghaffar Khan to go to our parts to wean his co-religionists from usury. Let also our bankers and money-lenders betimes make drastic reductions in their rates of interest, lest drastic legislation should find them unprepared. The peasants are being crushed to extinction, so let the money-lenders adopt eight per cent as the maximum rate to afford them some relief.

"Let the zamindars and maharajas be assured that the Congress does not seek to destroy them, but is determined to destroy all wrong and injustice. Let them make an earnest endeavour to understand the grievances of their tenants and introduce adequate measures of relief before legislation overtakes them. It is open to them to join the Congress.

"Let it be understood that this resolution by no means has any finality. It is open to the A.-I.C.C. to revise, amend or add to the twenty points, and so let no one oppose the resolution for mere difference on matters of detail. Those, however, who are opposed to the policy and principle must reject it, but they must bear in mind that the poor man's swaraj is soon coming and let them not be found unprepared when it actually comes."

Second Settlement

1931

KARACHI gave the mandate to Gandhi to represent the Congress at the Round Table Conference. But the road to London was tortuous. Official statements were made in Britain that the safeguards were settled once for all. Gandhi was worried. The Viceroy had assured him that the safeguards were entirely open to discussion, the Secretary of State and others were saying the opposite. "The question is vital," Gandhi observed. "The British Government at any conference must be open not merely to discussion on these questions, but to conviction."

The first hurdle Gandhi tried to negotiate was the communal tangle and the start was made at Karachi itself, where the annual session of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind was held on April 1, 1931, under the presidentship of Azad. A large crowd of Muslims, particularly the women, with their veils off, lined the half-a-mile route through which Gandhi and the Congress leaders drove to the conference. Azad, inaugurating the session, said that it was an irony of fate that those Muslims who had drunk deep from the fountain of modern learning had not joined the movement but the members of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema who were scholars of Arabic on older lines had thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the fray. He requested the Muslims who demanded rights to understand the responsibilities also.

Addressing the audience, Gandhi referred to the communal riots in Agra, Benares, Cawnpore, Mirzapore and several other places where the Hindus and Muslims fought like enemies. He could not apportion the blame to either community alone but at Cawnpore, according to press reports, the Hindus had started the mischief. Gandhi said that it was a great sin to use force in the matter of hartals. "I appeal to you, the learned theologians of Islam, to use your good offices and eradicate the poison of communalism from

the Musalmans and teach them the doctrine of mutual goodwill and toleration," he observed. "I will make a similar appeal to the Hindus not to return blow for blow but treat the Musalmans as their brethren even if the Musalmans are in the wrong." Hindu-Muslim unity alone could achieve swaraj for India, and he was convinced that unless the inter-communal question was solved, it would be useless to go to the Round Table Conference. Speaking for himself, he was prepared to concede to the Muslims everything that they wanted. He referred to the Congress declaration of fundamental rights and said that the swaraj they were working for would be a swaraj for the poor. He appealed to all present to join the Congress and strengthen it for winning swaraj. He asked the learned audience for their blessings in his efforts to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity for which purpose he was leaving for Delhi the next day.

In Delhi, where the All-India Muslim Conference was in session, Gandhi conferred with its leaders to bring about an agreement, but he failed. The conference showed itself uncompromisingly in the favour of separate electorates and unqualified in its opposition to the Congress. Shaukat Ali, referring to the Muslim demands, said: "These were formulated at the Muslim Conference on the 1st of January 1929. Later on the Muslim League accepted them *in toto* and they began to be called Jinnah's fourteen points. We stand by them today."

From Delhi, Gandhi issued a statement in which he pointed out that his view on the Hindu-Muslim question was that of full surrender to any unanimously expressed wish of the Muslims and Sikhs. Before he cultivated Hindu opinion, he wanted to have that formula, but it had not been forthcoming. He said that he was unable to identify himself with solution based on communalism.

On April 7 he opened the annual session of the Federation of Indian Chambers at the old Council Hall, before a distinguished audience including Sir George Schuster. The federation was composed of forty-three commercial and mercantile associations drawn from all parts of India. The audience which was mostly Indian was addressed by Gandhi in Hindustani:

"Your president has dwelt on the insistence of the Englishmen that in any constitution which may be granted to India the rights of the Englishmen, and especially of the English commercial and

mercantile firms in India, should be safeguarded. The Congress has considered this question carefully, and I should like to state its position. It has been said that the Indian swaraj will be the rule of the majority community, the Hindus. There could not be a greater mistake than that. If it were to be true, I would refuse to call it swaraj and would fight it with all the strength at my command, for to me Hind Swaraj is the rule of all the people, is the rule of justice. Whether under that rule, the ministers were Hindus or Musalmans or Sikhs, and whether the legislatures were exclusively filled by the Hindus or Musalmans or any other community, they would have to do even-handed justice. And just as no community in India need have any fear of swaraj being monopolized by any other, even so the Englishmen should have no fear. The question of safeguards should not arise; swaraj would be real swaraj only when there would be no occasion for safeguarding any such rights.

"How is it that the insistence on equal rights by the Europeans comes to us with a shock of surprise? How is it that it does not strike us as natural and legitimate? The answer puts me in mind of an incident in South Africa. With reference to the question of the race and colour prejudice there, General Smuts once told me a story which impressed me very much. 'When I was about the same time as you studying in England,' he said, 'I had no race prejudice or colour prejudice against your people. In fact, if we had known each other we should have lived as friends or brothers. Why is it then that now we have become rivals, that we have conflicting interests? It is not colour prejudice or race prejudice, though some of our people do ignorantly talk in those terms, but there is one thing which I want you to recognize. It is this. I may have no racial legislation, but how will you solve the difficulty about the fundamental difference between our cultures? Let alone the question of superiority, there is no doubt but that your civilization is different from ours. Ours must not be overwhelmed by yours. That is why we have to go in for legislation which must in effect put disabilities on you.' I understood what he said and recognized that we could not have any other standard there. I also appreciated the fear of being swamped in these days of swift communications. If, therefore, we wanted to live in South Africa, I said to myself, we must adopt their standard of life, so long as it was not against morality.

"Let us try to understand the genesis of this talk of equal rights in the light of what I have said. With all deference I would tell the Englishmen that at the back of their insistence is their insistence on living their standard and civilization. There is a wide gulf between our way of life and that of the Viceroy, however good he may be. Our people, when they go abroad, adopt the manners and customs of those countries, but shed them as soon as they come back home, and if they retain them, they become strangers. It is a mercy that the western way of life has not yet taken deep root in our country. But the fear at the back of the Indian's mind is lest he should be swamped by the onrush of western civilization. In this problem, I invite the help of all Englishmen who, if they choose to stay here, must live in conformity with our way of life and as the servants of our country. The same cause has been at the root of the clash between the Chinese and the Europeans and the Chinese and the Americans. I want English friends to understand what I am saying. The whole trouble arises out of the Englishmen's insistence on living according to his western way of life and western standards. If then we contemplate examining the so-called vested rights in the light of India's interests, it is not because of racial prejudice but because of vital necessity. Their vested rights may not smother nascent indigenous enterprise.

"Your president has paid a tribute to the Congress and has suggested that it should confer with commercial experts in economic matters. I welcome the suggestion. The Congress would always be glad of your advice and help. I may tell you that the Congress does not belong to any particular group of men; it belongs to all, but the protection of the poor peasantry, which forms the bulk of the population, must be its primary interest. The Congress must, therefore, truly represent the poor. But that does not mean that all other classes—the middle classes, the capitalist or zamindar—must go under. All that it aims at is that other classes must subserve the interest of the poor. The Congress stands for the industrial prosperity and progress of India. The industrial classes are slowly coming within the Congress fold . . . I cannot forget the services rendered by the commercial classes, but I want you to go a step further. I want you to make the Congress your own and we would willingly surrender the reins to you. The work can be better done by you. But if you decide to assume the reins, you can do so on

one condition only. You should regard yourselves as trustees and servants of the poor. Your commerce must be regulated for the benefit of the toiling millions.

"If we want your co-operation in our task, I want that of the Englishmen too. I want to remind them of the services rendered to the Congress in the past by distinguished Englishmen and Englishwomen like Hume, Yule, Wedderburn, and Mrs. Besant. I want Englishmen now to join us in our work of serving the poor. It is entirely a matter of goodwill, a matter of the heart. Give your heart to the poor of India. In conclusion I repeat that the Congress seeks to represent all. Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations inasmuch as we will exploit none, just as we will allow none to exploit us. Through swaraj we want to serve the whole world. In this task I invite your greater co-operation so that civil disobedience may not have to be resumed. With your material and intellectual co-operation heartily rendered, our demand for swaraj would be absolutely irresistible."

His address to the federation led to severe criticism in Anglo-Indian journals. That it was made in Hindustani was considered preposterous by *Times of India*. Another critic fell foul of Gandhi's remark that Indian civilization must not be allowed to be wiped out by the inroads from the West; he ridiculed the loin-cloth. "The critic has confused Indian civilization with the loin-cloth," said Gandhi. "But in so far as the loin-cloth also spells simplicity let it represent Indian civilization. It is a mingling of the cultures represented by the different faiths and influenced by the geographic and other environment in which the cultures have met. Thus Islamic culture is not the same in Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and India but is itself influenced by the conditions of the respective countries. Indian culture is, therefore, Indian. It is neither Hindu, Islamic nor any other, wholly. It is a fusion of all and essentially eastern. I had in mind that culture. And every one who calls himself or herself an Indian is bound to treasure that culture, be its trustee and resist any attack upon it.

"European civilization is no doubt suited for the Europeans but it will mean ruin for India, if we endeavour to copy it. This is not to say that we may not adopt and assimilate whatever may be good and capable of assimilation by us, as it does not also mean that even the Europeans will not have to part with whatever evil

might have crept into it. Let us engrave on our hearts the motto of a western philosopher, 'plain living and high thinking'. Today it is certain that the millions cannot have high living and we the few who profess to do the thinking for the masses run the risk, in a vain search after high living, of missing high thinking."

Another critic said that the loin-cloth would not become even "Mahatma Gandhi" in his capacity as a representative of India in the West. "As to the dress I have had many advisers," Gandhi replied. "If I go to England I shall go as a representative and nothing more, nothing less. I must appear not as the English would have me, but as my representative character demands. I represent the Congress because and in so far as it represents Daridranarayan, the semi-starved, almost naked villager. And if I represent the landed or monied or educated Indian, I do so to the extent that they identify themselves with Daridraṇarayan and desire to promote his interest. I can, therefore, appear neither in English costume nor in that of the polished Nehrus. In spite of the closest bond between us, it would have been just as ludicrous for me to dress as Pandit Motilalji did as it would have been for him to appear in loin-cloth . . . I should be guilty of discourtesy to the English, if I deceived them by appearing not as I am."

Gandhi went from Delhi to Amritsar for the Sikh League meeting on April 8. The journey was most trying; he was a victim all the way of blind love and mad devotion. "Here you find me prisoner of my own people," he exclaimed with a cry of anguish. The Sikh leaders had met him in Delhi only a few days ago. "Have you anything new to tell me?" he asked. Master Tara Singh summed up the attitude of the Sikhs thus: "We are pledged to fight communalism tooth and nail. You suggest a national solution and we will submit to it. The total surrender that you now suggest is not a national solution, and we will not allow ourselves to be bullied by any community."

"But," said Gandhi, "if you insist on the national point of view, the way you have adopted is hardly the way."

"The only way to fight communalism is by counter-demands of the same nature," insisted the Sikh leader.

Gandhi answered: "You cannot fight communalism by communalism. But mine is the only solution, communal or national. The very moment you realize that we do not want a third power to

arbitrate for us, we will for the moment agree to surrender everything—not because it is the ideal solution or a just solution but because it is the only expedient. And why do you fear willing surrender to a community as such? Take my attitude on the national flag question. The flag is my own personal creation. It has been before the country for ten years, a lot of sentiment has gathered round it, much sacrifice and suffering has been gone through to keep it flying. Do you think it is a pleasure to me to agree to its being altered? But I know that you are dissatisfied, and if only to please your community I agreed to have a committee about the flag. In the same way we might be called upon to do many things to satisfy a particular community."

But this did not seem to carry conviction. "Well," said Gandhi, "I suggest that you should meet the nationalist Muslims, discuss the situation with them and arrive at a solution which satisfies them and you and place it before the country."

From Amritsar he proceeded to Ahmedabad to preside over the convocation of Gujarat Vidyapith. For the first time in its existence for ten years, the *vidyapith* gave diplomas without examination. Of the seventy-seven students, sixty-five joined the movement and forty-five went to jail. Gandhi's speech this time struck a new note. It was addressed not so much to the students as to the soldiers of freedom:

"I am hoping that the provisional settlement may lead to permanent peace, and I shall leave no stone unturned to achieve it. But man is often powerless before nature. I at any rate cannot strive with nature, and nature seems for the time being to be against us. And if God wills that there should be no peace, you may be sure that the next struggle will be fiercer than the last and will engulf us all. And it may have to be fought without any resources. Gujarat may be always ready to contribute funds, but even the resources of Gujarat are not inexhaustible. Let us, therefore, think twice before we expend a pie and curtail our expenditure in all directions. Let us not go to sleep, now that there is a provisional settlement. We have to be more wakeful, more cautious, more careful, and let us be ready to account for every pie that we receive from the public."

From Ahmedabad he went to Bombay to bid farewell to Lord Irwin and had his last talk with the retiring Viceroy on April 18.

During his short stay in Bombay, he interviewed the Governor in connection with the carrying out of truce terms. Fresh troubles were brewing out of the Government's attempts to collect revenue in Gujarat. It was understood that no coercive measures would be adopted beyond the ordinary law and Lord Irwin had promised a considerate and even generous attitude towards the peasants. In practice, however, it was just the opposite.

In Borsad there was a threat of coercive processes and Gandhi decided to collect unimpeachable evidence and face the authorities with it. This meant examining each of the hundreds of *khatedars*, going critically into his losses and scrutinizing documents and witnesses. But he was inexhorable: "I know no other way of helping the poor cultivator. He must have relief, if he has suffered heavy losses and can prove them. No matter how much trouble and time is involved in the work, it has got to be done." He gave detailed instructions. Everyone who could pay was bound to pay the current year's dues. No satyagrahi was bound to borrow on interest in order to pay the dues, but he was free to do so if he chose to or was not prepared to undergo the fire of coercive processes, in the event of breakdown. Only absolutely provable losses during the struggle were to be taken into account. Non-satyagrahis were advised to pay the dues even though they might have to borrow. Mahadev Desai was put in charge of Borsad and Vallabhbhai Patel looked after Bardoli.

On April 30, Gandhi came out with an article on the Gujarat farmer. "I claim," he said, "that the Bardoli farmers have done exceedingly well and this in spite of the fact that the forfeited lands had not yet been returned, that some of these had even been sold, that the old *patels* and *talatis* had not been reinstated, that all the prisoners had not been released and that prosecutions against them were still pending." In Bardoli, Rs. 21,00,000 out of Rs. 22,00,000 had been paid out of the current dues.

"Although there is no unwillingness to pay, threats of coercive measures are kept hanging like Damocles' sword over the heads of the people," said Gandhi. "But I have pledged my word to Lord Irwin that so far it is humanly possible, I shall prevent the truce from breaking. It has hurt me to take the public into confidence even to the extent I have done. But I feel that I can no longer suppress the fact that there are ominous signs on the horizon."

By the middle of May he saw the new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, at Simla and acquainted him with serious breaches of the pact by the provincial governments. A British correspondent reported that Lord Willingdon was "deliberately trying to end personal negotiation policy so successfully worked by Irwin". To a British paper which sent a cable asking the question—"Whether you will go to England"—Gandhi replied: "My coming is contingent upon certain circumstances, two of which are satisfactory working of the settlement and solution of the communal question."

In a short speech at Simla, on May 14, Gandhi said: "Let us fulfil our part of the settlement, no matter whether Government do theirs or no, and then decide what to do. The settlement means that we agreed to try to achieve swaraj by means of argument and negotiation. We endorsed the settlement at Karachi. Let us not, therefore, consciously nurse the desire for a breakdown and fight. Let us try our best to turn the provisional settlement into a permanent one, so that the natural fruit of it may be swaraj. If it is impossible to achieve swaraj by argument and negotiation, suffering and sacrifice would have to be resorted to, but let us exhaust every means in our power to avoid that alternative."

In the North-West Frontier the authorities acted high-handedly. There was trouble over picketing and the question of land revenue. The increasing influence of Ghaffar Khan was not to the officials' liking. Gandhi and Jawaharlal were not permitted to visit the Frontier Province. In Bengal there was intense repression leading to terrorist deeds. In the United Provinces trouble was brewing; the provincial Government temporized with the agrarian problem and delayed a decision about rent and revenue remissions, and forcible collections were started. There were wholesale ejectments and attachments. Dissension between landlords and tenants grew. The agrarian situation was daily growing worse.

From Simla, Gandhi went to the United Provinces to smooth the tense situation. In Nainital he discussed the problem with the Governor of U. P., Sir Malcolm Hailey, without much success. During his five days' stay on the hill-station, a stream of Congress workers visited him to explain the real situation in the province. Many rich and fashionable folk, including Government officials, surrounded Gandhi, but he told them his mind in a memorable speech. "The Congress will stand by you," he said, "but you too

will have to make your life correspond to your surroundings. In Bengal some years ago I was the guest of a zamindar who served me my milk and fruit in gold bowls and plates. The good host naturally thought, that he was doing me his greatest honour by placing before me his costliest plate. But he could not know what was passing through my mind. 'Where did he get these golden plates from?' I was asking to myself, and the answer I got was, 'From the substance of the ryots.' How then I could reconcile myself to those costly luxuries? I would not mind your using gold plates, provided your tenants were comfortable enough to afford silver plates, but when their life is one long drawn out agony, how dare you have those luxuries? You will remember, how fifteen years ago, on the occasion of the opening of the Hindu University, I shocked the rajas and maharajas by a reference to their glittering pomp and glory, and raised quite an uproar. My views are the same today; only experience and life among the humble folk have confirmed them all the more."

On June 9 the Congress Working Committee met in Bombay to discuss the general situation in the country. Gandhi was against proceeding to London unless the Hindu-Muslim question was first solved in India. He felt that if the conference became entangled in the communal issue right at the beginning, the real political and economic issues would not get the proper consideration. The Working Committee decided that the other conditions being favourable, Gandhi should represent the Congress at the R. T. C. Gandhi accepted the verdict but took the public into confidence. He wrote in *Young India* of June 18:

"It was my essentially democratic nature which, in spite of my very strong objection, impelled me to submit to the resolution. One may not make a principle of every objection and, if not carried block the way by threatening to retire from an institution or by refusing submission to the opinion of the majority. I, therefore, fought the Working Committee, reminded it of my repeated public and private declarations and moved informally a resolution myself which I thought was more consistent and desirable in the national interest. But I could not carry with me the majority who thought that not to attend the conference by reason of the failure of a communal settlement would be to play into the hands of the enemy and expose the committee to unnecessary misrepresentation.

"Though there is much to be said for the majority view, I regard mine to be safer and more truly in consonance with the Lahore resolution on the communal question. There was, in my opinion, sound reasoning behind my declaration that I should not attend the Round Table Conference if there was no agreed settlement of the communal question. Absence of it would mean absence of unity, and absence of unity would deprive the national demand of the strength required to secure its acceptance.

"My proposition, therefore, before the Working Committee was that the agreed settlement failing, the Congress should give up the hope of winning a swaraj constitution by the way of the present Round Table Conference and should wait till all the communities were satisfied to adopt a purely national solution. The Congress could meanwhile further consolidate its position and work with greater concentration for the masses including all the communities and thus make the toilers of all the other communities regard the Congress as theirs as the Hindus do.

"This does not mean giving up the struggle for freedom. It all depends upon what we mean by and want through Purna Swaraj. If we mean an awakening among the masses, a knowledge among them of their true interest and ability to serve that interest against the whole world, and if through Purna Swaraj we want harmony, freedom from aggression from within or without and a progressive improvement in the economic condition of the masses, we can gain our end without political power and by directly acting upon the powers that be. One form of direct action is adult suffrage. The second and more potent form is satyagraha. It can be shown that whatever is needful and can be gained by political power can be more quickly and more certainly gained by satyagraha. If such is the case and if, in spite of all attempt to secure an honourable settlement of the communal question fails, it is obvious that we should give up the attempt to secure a swaraj constitution at the present moment. It is better and quicker to wait till the Congress has become equally popular with the other communities, than to try to force swaraj through highly artificial surroundings. If the Congress means what it says, it cannot be long gaining adherence of all the other communities. Meanwhile the Congress must fulfil its mission of representing the starving millions by fighting for their relief, if it cannot do so by gaining power then by gaining that

relief through the government existing at the moment. Whilst discussing this probability with English friends, I was reminded that this position was hardly fair, not to take the power to make the reforms and to force the hands of those who cannot carry on administration if they grant the reforms, in their opinion only so called. I pointed out the fallacy underlying the rebuke. The Congress is ever ready to take the power if it is given to it, but it is too weak to seize power from unwilling hands in the artificial surroundings of the Round Table Conference and that in the absence of real unity between the chief actors, the communities.

"The Congress wants the substance and not the shadow. It can, therefore, wait for the shadow of power, it cannot wait for the substance of freedom which the dumb millions so badly need and can understand.

"I have placed before the public the main part of the argument I placed before the Working Committee of the Congress. It failed to convince its majority. It may fail, therefore, to convince too the majority of the public. Nevertheless, my position will probably be the same as now, if and when the conference fails to meet the Congress position.

"But having accepted the resolution of the Working Committee, I shall faithfully carry it out and work at the conference with all possible zeal, if I am destined to attend it. I should not reject real power if it is real. I should put my whole soul into working for it. But I have wisdom and patience enough to wait for it if necessary and know that such waiting may be a process of hastening."

The Working Committee meeting over, Gandhi went to Gujarat and had to stay in Borsad interviewing officials and corresponding with the Government of India. But it was not Gujarat alone that had its difficulties about the settlement. Complaints were pouring in from all over India that the officials were breaking the Delhi pact. "Be that as it may," declared Gandhi, "there should be no haste on the part of Congressmen, there should be no breaches of orders till the Working Committee has considered the situation." On July 7, the committee met in Bombay to consider the extraordinary situation that was developing everywhere. On July 9 he took the public into confidence, and *Young India* came out with the editorial, "Is it Crumbling?" A detailed list of complaints in the Punjab, U.P., Bengal and elsewhere was featured with the

caution, "You must wait as long as the Working Committee thinks it necessary."

About the middle of July the complaints which became known as the Congress charge-sheet were personally handed to Mr. Emerson, the Home Secretary, by Gandhi at Simla. On July 18, Gandhi had an interview with Lord Willingdon. The press correspondents, among whom were many foreigners, pestered him with the question: "Are the officials implementing the truce?" He simply said: "Go to the secretariat."

The correspondence between the Government and Gandhi continued. In the midst of a delicate situation, there were terrorist deeds by the end of July. The first was an attempt on the life of Sir Ernest Hotson, the acting Governor of Bombay, while visiting the Fergusson College, Poona. The assailant, a student, fired point-blank at Hotson, who had a miraculous escape. Five days later, Mr. Garlick, District Judge of Alipore, was shot dead. *Statesman* arraigned the Congress for Garlick's murder. A crowded meeting of the Europeans in Calcutta called for action on the part of the Government. "The Bhagat Singh worship has done and is doing incalculable harm to the country," said Gandhi. He, however, warned the Government against retribution and repression. "They can deal with the disease only by dealing with the cause. If they have neither the will nor the courage to do so, let them leave the rest to the nation."

The A.-I.C.C. met on August 6. For the first time in its history during the last twelve years, it recorded a unanimous vote in the favour of a resolution condemning political murders. Gandhi had invited full discussion on the following resolution:

"The A.-I.C.C. deplores the attempted assassination of H. E. the acting Governor and the assassination of Judge Garlick in Bengal. While condemning all political murders, including attempts at murder, the A.-I.C.C. regards the attempted assassination of the acting Governor of Bombay as the more condemnable inasmuch as it was an act done by a student of a college that had invited the Governor as its honoured guest. The A.-I.C.C. warns those who secretly or openly approve of or encourage such murders that they retard the progress of the country. The A.-I.C.C. calls upon Congress organizations to carry on special propaganda against all acts of public violence, even where provocation is given for such

deeds. Further the A.-I.C.C. appeals to the nationalist press to use all its influence in this behalf."

"Let me tell you in all humility that there is much more in my heart than is contained in the text of the resolution," said Gandhi in moving the resolution which was his own draft. "I would have liked to go further, but the resolution represents the extent to which I was certain that I would carry you with me. I may inform you that there was complete unanimity on this in the Working Committee, and I wish it may be the same here too. Yet I do not want you to accept this resolution without thoroughly thrashing out its pros and cons. If it does not appeal to you, you will not hesitate to reject it. But if you pass it, let it go forth as a declaration, that we want to fool neither the Englishmen nor the world but that so long as the Congress has truth and non-violence as its creed, it is our duty to be truthful and non-violent in thought, word and deed, and to endeavour to plead with and wean those who are not with us from the path of violence.

"Ever since we adopted this as our creed, or policy if you will, in 1920, the plea has frequently been advanced, that the Congress has nothing to do with the violent acts of non-Congressmen, that the Congress should, whilst adhering to its creed, leave alone those who do not believe in it. I have been pointing out all through, that inasmuch as the Congress claims to speak for the whole of India, Parsis, Jews, Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and inasmuch as we want to win swaraj not only for Congressmen, but for the whole country, we must accept responsibility for the deeds of every Indian. It is not Congressmen alone that carried on the struggle last year. The whole country fought side by side with Congressmen, and we gratefully accepted and gained by their help. We must influence the political assassin. And this we can only do if we regard him as our brother and be responsible for his acts.

"This is no new suggestion of mine. The Rowlatt Bill satyagraha had to be suspended because of the outbreak of violence among those who were strangers to the Congress. And the much criticized Bardoli decision was taken because we could not disown responsibility for Chauri Chaura.

"If, however, I fail to carry conviction, say so plainly. But if what I say appeals to you, you must accept the resolution wholeheartedly and with all its implications. When in the past we have

condemned the acts of violence, we have expressed admiration for courage and sacrifice of the young men. In my opinion the limit was reached when we passed the Bhagat Singh resolution at Karachi. I now feel that it was a mistake. Those who knew Bhagat Singh had told me a good deal about his fine character, his rare courage and sacrifice and so I drafted the resolution. But I find that the qualifications of the resolution have been forgotten, and the praises have been exploited. I am deeply pained. Some said that I held the resolution as a sop to the youth whose approval of the settlement I was anxious for. Those who say so do not know me. Not even for the freedom of India would I resort to an untruth, much less for a trifling thing like gaining the acceptance of a settlement. Neither did the object of going to the R.T.C. weigh with me. Had any such motive actuated me in sponsoring the resolution, it would have been a fraud on the public and the world. But I now see clearly, that however worthy the motive was, the way in which the resolution was worded was a mistake, and we have avoided it this time.

"But I am asked: if you condemn the deeds of your young men, why not simultaneously condemn those of Government too? Those who argue like this do not know the Congress. The Congress is pledged to end this system of Government and no condemnation of it will help to mend it. The existence of the Congress is a standing condemnation of the system. To recite the wrongs of the Government at the time of condemning political murders is to confuse the issue, and to mislead the hot-blooded youth. We must tell them in the clearest possible language, that they must cease to murder, no matter how great may be the provocation.

"But how, it is further asked, can you end the present system by the way of non-violence? Surely the progress made by the country since 1920 is sufficiently tangible proof of the success. But whether we shall succeed or not is not the question. There is the Congress creed, and we have to work it out faithfully. Hence we must not in any way identify ourselves with the murderous activities that we witness about us. It would be perfectly legitimate for those who do not believe in the Congress creed to agitate for its removal, and there will be no need for such a resolution as the one before you. We must not deceive ourselves or the world.

"Now a word to the nationalist papers. They can help a great deal if they will. One often sees glaring headlines in them suggestive

of approval of political murder. Let them, therefore, beware of the slightest suggestion of encouragement to violence.

"I am told by young men, that if I cannot help them, I should keep quiet, but not hinder them. My answer to them is, if you must kill English officials, why not kill me instead? I plead guilty to the charge of putting an obstacle in your way in my own way. It is my creed. Have no mercy on me and despatch me straightway. But so long as there is breath in me, I must resist you in the manner I know. If you will spare me, do not lay hands on Government servants, be they big or small."

In reply to the criticism of those who moved amendments to the resolution, Gandhi said:

"Some of the speakers have appealed to me to add words containing a reference to the Government. Abhyankar has credited me with the courage of confessing Himalayan blunders and with being supremely reasonable. I may tell him that it is because of my reasonableness that I cannot accept the suggestion, for all that he wants is contained in the words 'even where provocation is given.' If you go on harping on sacrifice and courage of our youths, I tell you, you will only help to send many more of them to the gallows. I do not so much mind the Government hanging them as you are driving them to the gallows, and I warn you that that is what you are actually doing by condemning violence in one breath and applauding the courage behind it in the other.

"Abhyankar warns me, that our resolutions of condemnation have no effect on the youths. He is mistaken. Every word that we say here reaches their ears. It sometimes angers them but it often makes them think, and I humbly suggest that we can react on them only to the extent that we are in earnest. Let us, therefore, tell them plainly and unequivocally, that their action does not help us but hinders us. If you have elected to trust me, you must also trust my methods. But if you don't, the honest course is to disown me and to change the creed."

During its three-day session the A.-I.C.C. passed some important resolutions. The Working Committee having carefully considered the report of the Fundamental Rights Committee recommended to the A.-I.C.C. the amended resolution, which was unanimously passed. The A.-I.C.C. confirmed the following change in national flag recommended by the Working Committee:

"The flag is to be three-coloured, horizontally arranged as before, but the colours shall be saffron, white and green in the order stated here from top to bottom with the spinning wheel in dark blue in the centre of the white strip; it being understood that the colours have no communal significance, but that saffron represents courage and sacrifice, white, peace and truth, and green shall represent faith and chivalry, and the spinning wheel the hope of the masses. The proportions of the flag shall be length to breadth as three is to two."

The A.-I.C.C. took two important steps, namely, the adoption of the Hindustan Seva Dal and the reconstruction of the Frontier Congress organization and the volunteer organization, known as Khudai Khidmatgar, so as to make them conform to the Congress programme and the Congress creed. "Let the Seva Dal men be the salt of the Congress earth," said Gandhi. "That army will be more powerful than any violent army. The violent army cannot prevent the poison of untruth and communal strife from spreading, but you as a non-violent army should be able to check it."

On August 8, Gandhi made a statement on the question of his going to London:

"I am doing all that is humanly possible to enable me to go to London. The settlement commits the Congress to participate in the R.T.C. to place the Congress point of view before it. But without the necessary atmosphere, my going there would be futile. I, therefore, declared that I could not go unless there was a solution of the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh problem. The Working Committee discussed my declaration, my reasoning did not appeal to it, and I had to bow to its decision that I must go even though a solution could not be attained before my going. But that did not mean that I should go there as a mere Hindu. If I went as a mere Hindu, I should cease to be a representative of the Congress. It belongs to all communities, and the Working Committee decided that I had no reason to absent myself from the R.T.C., even if I might have to go there with less strength and less self-confidence. That meant a step forward in the direction of London.

"But there were other difficulties, one of them being the implementing of the truce by Government. In this connection I made up my mind, that I must not make much of minor breaches of the truce. For instance, there are still many in jail who should have been released under the settlement, there are prosecutions going on,

and arrests being made. But as we the workers have voluntarily chosen the path of suffering, a few months' imprisonment is of small account. But it is quite a different matter where the peasants are concerned. How can I ask them to put up with more suffering? The Congress is essentially and pre-eminently a kisan organization. It endeavours to represent the zamindars and propertied classes, but only to the extent that the interests of kisans are not prejudiced thereby. The Congress is nothing if it does not represent the kisans. And I was faced with the kisan problem in U.P. and Gujarat. Mr. Emerson, the Home Secretary, helped to the extent that he could. The Viceroy also assured me that I need not worry and that he would do everything needful. Cordial as this assurance was, I wanted to see if there were any signs of the assurance being carried out. I am carrying on negotiations, and you may be sure that I shall not put too great a strain on those from whom I expect the assurance. I am not conceited enough to feel that everything here would be at sixes and sevens in my absence. But having been the sole Congress representative to carry on negotiations with Lord Irwin, and being so intimately connected with the kisans, I cannot leave for London if there is no relief or hope of it, even for the existing state of things. That is why I ran up to Poona as soon as I was summoned by the Governor of Bombay, and now am waiting for a reply from him. I sent him a telegram this morning, and I am hourly expecting a reply. I am waiting for a sign and as soon as I get it, I shall decide. But do not be sure that I am sailing until I have actually boarded the ship. For who knows what happens between today and the fifteenth?"

He referred to recent communal rioting, and burst into tears in the midst of his speech. "I hear rumblings of the storm and I want you not to be surprised if you find me quail before it," he said with great emotion. "I did not come here to pour out my feeling before you, but as I was proceeding it was impossible for me to choke the rising emotions. I have gone through a heart-training which enables me to keep outwardly smiling, while a storm may be raging in my breast. That storm has reached a crisis and I am feeling unnerved and seem to have lost all power. And, therefore, I say that although the atmosphere may be clear so far as Government are concerned, I may not be able to go because there is a doubt lurking in my breast that when the moment comes it may

find me unprepared. Think of the disgraceful scenes in the Jinnah Memorial Hall the other day. That makes me unfit for the work of swaraj. So I say that although the atmosphere may otherwise be clear, something might happen which might make me mad and absolutely powerless. Surely you would not then want to send to London a man who was so unnerved. You must send someone with faith, and I find myself fast losing faith. And that produced the collapse that you saw a moment ago."

In the meanwhile, correspondence between the Government and Gandhi continued leading to a crisis. The Working Committee sat for three hours on August 11 to deliberate on the situation and on the same day, he sent a telegram to the Viceroy explaining the impossible situation. "When I read Bombay Government's letter together with Sir Malcolm Hailey's telegram received in an answer to my inquiry and reports of continuing harassment in the United Provinces, the Frontier Province and other provinces, they seem to me a complete indication that I must not sail." Lord Willingdon sent a reply on August 13, defending the provincial authorities: "I am unable to accept these reasons as valid and I cannot but feel that your misgivings arise from a misunderstanding of the policy of the Government and the grounds on which it rests." Promptly replied Gandhi: "Your assurances I must read in the light of the present happenings. If you can see in them nothing inconsistent with the settlement, it shows a fundamental difference in our respective outlooks upon the settlement." He said: "There is no way left open to me but to confirm the decision already taken."

The Working Committee issued a statement on the same day: "The committee notes with regret that there have been in its opinion repeated and serious breaches by provincial governments of the conditions of the Delhi settlement. A stage was reached when failing satisfaction Mahatma Gandhi had asked, with the approval of the Working Committee, for the appointment of an impartial tribunal to investigate the allegations of the breaches and to interpret the terms of the settlement. Such request has now been refused even in matters affecting the vital interests of the peasantry. The committee has, therefore, been obliged reluctantly to come to the conclusion that consistently with the terms of the settlement and the national interest, the Congress cannot and should not be represented at the Round Table Conference."

On August 14, the Viceroy released the correspondence between the Government and Gandhi. On that day Sapru and Jayakar saw Gandhi, on the eve of their departure to London. Malaviya, Mrs. Naidu and Prabhashankar Pattani cancelled their passages. Gandhi said he would dash to London the moment the way was clear, and added: "The civilians here do not want me to attend the Round Table Conference, or if they do, they do so under circumstances which a national organization like the Congress can never tolerate." On August 14, Gandhi wrote the following letter to the Viceroy:

"Events have moved so fast that I have not had the time to acknowledge your kind letter of 31st July. I recognize the sincerity running through that communication, but the latest developments have made that letter past history, and as I have said in my wire of the 13th instant, the sum total of all the circumstances betrays a fundamental difference of outlook between us. I can only give you my assurance that it was not without the greatest and most anxious deliberation, that I came to the conclusion that in view of your decision I could not, consistently with my obligations here, attend the R.T.C. I was grieved when I heard that your decision was affected by the opinion ascribed to you that I had insisted upon a board of arbitration and that I was trying to set myself up as a head of parallel government. As for the board of arbitration it is true that I have claimed it as a matter of right, but if you recall our conversation I never insisted upon it. On the contrary, I told you that so long as I got the justice to which I was entitled I would be quite satisfied. You will agree that this is wholly different from insisting on a board of arbitration. And as to the alleged parallel government, I thought I had dispelled the illusion when, in reply to a jocular remark by you, I had said that I did not claim to be a district officer but that my co-workers and I had acted as voluntary village headmen and that too with the consent and knowledge of district officials. I should be sorry if these two opinions which I submit were erroneous had affected your decision.

"The purpose, however, of writing this letter is to inquire whether you regard the settlement as now at an end or whether it is to be still continued in spite of the abstention of the Congress from participation in the R.T.C. The Working Committee arrived at the following decision this morning:

" 'In view of the resolution relating to the non-participation of the Congress in the R.T.C., passed by the Working Committee on August 13, the committee desires to make it clear that this resolution should not be construed as ending the Delhi settlement. The committee, therefore, requests various Congress organizations and all Congressmen to continue to comply until further instructions with the terms of the settlement in so far as they are applicable to the Congress.'

"From this you will see that the Working Committee of the Congress has no desire to embarrass the Government at the present juncture and that, therefore, it is prepared to continue honourably to work the settlement. But such working must depend upon a reciprocal attitude on the part of the provincial governments. As I have told you so often through correspondence and our conversations, this reciprocity has been found to be progressively missing. Information continues to be received, at the office of the Working Committee, of Government activity which can only be interpreted to be token of a design to crush the Congress workers and the normal Congress activities. If, therefore, the settlement is to abide, I venture to think that an early relief in the matter of complaints already filed is necessary. More, as I have already said, are coming and co-workers are insistent that if relief is not had in time they should at least get the permission to adopt defensive measures. May I request an early reply?"

On August 20 *Young India* published the Congress charge-sheet, "Story of a Broken Pact," against officialdom in various provinces: "Though apparently very little difference between the Government and the Congress led to the decision of the Working Committee not to send me to London, really the difference was fundamental. I make bold to say that exemplary patience has been shown by the Congress. The charge-sheet will give a glimpse of the breaches alleged by the Congress to have been made by the respective provincial governments. If the settlement was a legalized document the Government would be suable in a court of law. The fact, however, that it is not legalized throws a double responsibility on the Government of giving the Congress a tribunal where it can prove those breaches, or where it can get an authoritative ruling on the interpretation of the several clauses of the settlement or of its implications. The refusal of the Government to concede the very

natural implication of the settlement shows how far the authorities in India are from recognizing the fact that power is passing to the people, nor are they willing to acknowledge that the Congress represents the people, and that its voluntary co-operation should mean acceptance of their orders and authority and not mutual trust and accommodation between parties to a contract.

"If the Congress was unworthy of confidence, or if its demand was distasteful or unacceptable to British Government, the settlement should not have been entered into. Further, if the Congress by any action on its part proved itself unworthy of confidence the settlement should have been repudiated. Either could have been an honest course. But to have commenced with distrust, hardly when the ink had dried on the paper on which the settlement was written was and still is difficult for me to understand. In spite of my belief that provincial governments had committed breaches, I was prepared, so far as my departure was concerned, to be satisfied merely with securing relief in the matter of Bardoli collections under coercion, and there too, my submission was either to grant a refund of the collection so made, or to have an impartial open inquiry so as to enable me to show that payments were in the vast majority of cases forced from the people, although they were unable to pay and, therefore, under the settlement entitled to refund. The matter would surely not have ended there because the Working Committee would have been bound to press for redress in all other cases. This evidently was too much for Government and, therefore, they decided to break on Bardoli."

Replying to the objection that he, in concentrating upon matters of detail, had really missed the opportunity of helping decisions on matters of higher interest, Gandhi pointed out that he did not look at the two things separately: "Bardoli, therefore, was for me the acid test. It was designed to gauge the civilian temper. Looked at in that light it was not a small thing even as the magnetic needle on an indicator is not a small thing."

The Viceroy, who was in Calcutta, hastened to Simla and held a meeting of his council, and sent a reply to Gandhi's letter of August 14. "The activities of the Congress," said Lord Willingdon, "during the last five months have, in many directions, been contrary both to the letter and the spirit of the Delhi settlement, and have involved a constant menace not only to the continuance of

the settlement but to the maintenance of peace, particularly in the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province." He reminded Gandhi that the refusal of the Congress to be represented at the Round Table Conference "involves the failure of one of the main objects which the settlement was intended to secure". Declaring that the Government would continue to avoid resort to special measures so far as that was possible, he added: "But so far as this action may relate to the activities of the Congress, its nature and extent must depend primarily on the nature of those activities, and the Government of India are unable to fetter their discretion or that of local governments in this respect."

Gandhi commented: "I do not consider the Viceroy's reply to be at all bad or disappointing. In fact, I was prepared for some such reply. I am glad too that, so far as I can understand the letter, the Government do not intend to terminate the settlement and as the public is well aware, the Working Committee of the Congress has already passed a resolution to that effect."

Gandhi wired to the Viceroy asking for an interview, so that he might personally explain to him and clear up the points on which there had been some misunderstanding. Lord Willingdon having agreed, Gandhi, accompanied by Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Ansari, reached Simla on 25th August, and at once started the negotiations. The discussions with Mr. Emerson covered a wide area, particularly the breaches relating to Gujarat, U.P. and the North-West Frontier, but finally they centered round Gujarat. Following the talk between Lord Willingdon and Gandhi, a communique, sometimes called the "second settlement", was then published on August 28. It provided that the Congress would be solely represented at the Round Table Conference by Gandhi; that the settlement of the 5th March would remain operative; that the Congress complaint regarding repression in Bardoli would be made the subject of an inquiry by a collector under precise terms of reference; that no inquiry would be held into any other complaint made by the Congress; and that future complaints would be dealt with in accordance with the ordinary administrative procedure, including the question of holding an inquiry, the necessity for which was determined by the local government concerned. Gandhi made it clear that "if any grievance is so actually felt that it becomes a paramount duty of the Congress to seek some method of relief, in

the absence of an inquiry, in the shape of defensive direct action, the Congress should be held free to adopt such remedy notwithstanding the suspension of civil disobedience." It was an integral part of the agreement.

The obstacle being removed, he hurried to fulfil his obligation. It was 7 o'clock when the document was signed on August 27. A special train from Simla to Kalka was arranged, and other trains were delayed to make the connections to enable Gandhi to reach Bombay in time to catch S.S. *Rajputana* on the 29th. With him sailed Malaviya, Mrs. Naidu, Prabhashankar Pattani, Mahadev Desai, Pyarelal, Devadas, Mirabehn, and G. D. Birla. According to the original plan, Dr. Ansari was also to accompany Gandhi as a delegate to the Round Table Conference, but Lord Willingdon would not agree.

"I must go to London with God as my only guide," Gandhi wrote: "He is a jealous Lord. He will allow no one to share His authority. One had, therefore, to appear before Him in all one's weakness, empty-handed and in a spirit of full surrender, and then He enables you to stand before a whole world and protects you from all harm. When I think of the prospects in London, when I know all is not well in India, and that the second settlement is bereft of all grace and is charged with no pleasant memories, there is nothing wanting to fill me with utter despair. The horizon is as black as it possibly could be. There is every chance of my returning empty-handed. That is just the state which realization of weakness finds one in. But believing as I do, that God has made the way to London clear for me, through the second settlement, I approach the visit with hope, and feel that any result that comes out of it would be good for the nation, if I do not prove faithless to the mandate given to me by the Congress."

At R.T.C.

1931

Gandhi was in the best of spirits during the voyage. He cracked jokes with passengers, played with children, and endeared himself to all by his unfailing courtesy and gentleness. Capt. Morton Jack treated him with every mark of respect and kindness, and allowed him even to try his hand at steering the ship for a while. Gandhi, deeply touched by the hospitality, said: "I am prisoner to you for a fortnight." "I will treat you well," the captain said, "but can make no promises about the weather." There was a storm but he did not suffer from seasickness. He had chosen a corner on second class deck, where he spent most of the day and all the night, strictly following his ashram routine.

Gandhi with his party said his morning prayer at four. It was too early for others to join, but practically all Indians—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis—and a sprinkling of Europeans attended the evening prayer. After the prayer a question was asked and Gandhi replied. One evening he explained the significance of prayer:

"The prayer has saved my life. Without it, I should have been a lunatic long ago. I had my share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me in temporary despair. If I was able to get rid of that despair, it was because of prayer. It has not been a part of my life as truth has been. It came out of sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight where I could not possibly be happy without it. And as time went on, my faith in God increased, and more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it. I had attended the Christian service in South Africa, but it had failed to grip me. I could not join them in it. They supplicated God, I could not ; I failed egregiously. I started with disbelief in God and prayer, and until at a late stage in life I did not feel anything like a void in life. But at that stage, I felt that as food was indispensable for the body, so was prayer

indispensable for the soul. In fact food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary to keep the body in health, but there is no such thing as prayer starvation. You cannot possibly have a surfeit of prayer. Three of the greatest teachers of the world—Buddha, Jesus, and Mahomed—have left unimpeachable testimony, that they found illumination through prayer and could not possibly live without it. Millions of Hindus, Musalmans and Christians find their only solace in life in prayer. Either you call them liars or self-deluded people. I will say that this 'lying' has a charm for me, a truth-seeker, if it is 'lying' that has given me that mainstay or staff of life, without which I could not live for a moment. In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact, I have found people who envy my peace. That peace comes from prayer. I am not a man of learning, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Everyone is a law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks, trodden by the ancient teachers. I have given my personal testimony. Let every one try and find that as a result of daily prayer he adds something new to his life."

After his morning and evening prayers he took his frugal meals, mainly consisting of dried fruits and pasteurized goat's milk with which he was well provided for. "Grapes or dates," was the usual question he put to the children who peeped into his cabin and gleefully bore away the plate of grapes. He took his walks regularly and slept soundly on the deck under the stars. Some friend had given a camp-cot for his use. "Oh, is that a camp-cot," he exclaimed, "I thought it was a hockey set. Well, let the hockey set go. Have you ever seen me use it?" He was adamant about the luggage of which he thought there was far too much. The entourage had borrowed suit-cases and he took them to task. "You absorbed all that came your way," he said, "as though you expected to stay about five years in England." Seven suit-cases and cabin trunks were sent back from the first port of call.

Gandhi wanted his colleagues to stick to their standard in India. "If you can go about in Simla with a dhoti, *kudta* and a pair of sandals, I assure you there is nothing to prevent you from doing so in England. If I found that you were not properly clad, I should myself warn you and get you more woollens." "From the number

of shawls that friends have given me," he said, "I should be able to run a shop. The friend who gave me that costly shawl worth Rs. 700, a shawl so delicate in texture that it can pass through a ring, thought perhaps that I should wear it in the R.T.C. to show how well I represent the millions of India." He sold that shawl to a wealthy passenger for Rs. 7,000. "That is all that a sole representative of the poor can do."

Gandhi spent the greater part of his time in spinning and the remainder in reading and writing. His correspondence while on board increased to such an extent that three operators were kept incessantly busy. Messages of welcome poured in from all parts of Europe and America. He replied to all and wrote not only for *Young India* but obliged other papers. But, there was no political news as such for him to give. When an American journalist remarked that he was sending something every day, Gandhi said jocularly: "I suppose you tell your readers every day that the journey has been uniformly uneventful." Asked by Reuter's special correspondent, who accompanied Gandhi on board, as to what his programme in London would be, he said:

"I shall strive for a constitution, which will release India from all thraldom and patronage and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in harmony. There can be no room in such India for the curse of untouchability or intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with the rest of the world, neither exploiting nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interest of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. I hate the distinction between foreign and indigenous. This is the India of my dreams, for which I shall struggle at the R.T.C. I may fail, but if I am to deserve the confidence of the Congress, my principals, I shall be satisfied with nothing less."

At Aden, the Resident refused to allow the Indians to fly the Indian national flag in welcoming him. Gandhi sent a message that he would not receive an address under such conditions, and the ban was lifted. A purse of 328 guineas and the address were

presented to him on behalf of the Indians and the Arabs with the Tricolour flying over the meeting. Replying to the address, Gandhi delivered the message of the Congress. Addressing the Arabs he said: "This great peninsula, the birthplace of Mahomed and Islam, can help to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem."

As the steamer neared Suez, Gandhi received greetings from the Wafd. "On happy occasion, crossing Egyptian waters, I send great leader of great India my heartiest compliments and best wishes," cabled Madame Zagloul Pasha. Nahas Pasha, the president of the Wafd, addressing "the great leader Al Mahatma Gandhi", wrote: "In the name of Egypt who is now fighting for its liberties and its independence, I welcome in you the foremost leader of that India which is also struggling to attain the same end."

At Suez and Port Said there were Indian deputations, but the authorities refused to grant permission to the Egyptian deputation, and only one representative of Nahas Pasha with great difficulty could reach him. The Egyptian journalists, however, were allowed to see him on the steamer and he gave them the message of non-violence and truth: "The law of love will work, just as the law of gravitation will work, whether we accept it or not. For, the force of non-violence is infinitely more wonderful and subtle than the material forces of nature, like for instance electricity."

On September 11, 1931, when the steamer anchored at Marseilles the first to receive Gandhi was Mlle Madeleine Rolland, who had come on behalf of her ailing brother, Romain Rolland, with a message of welcome. With her came Privat, a well-known author and pacifist. The sight of Gandhi in loin-cloth and shawl scandalized the French journalists. Was he really going to walk about London like that? Gandhi replied with his disarming smile. "You, in your country, wear plus-fours, but I prefer minus-fours." To the customs officer he declared: "I am a poor mendicant. My earthly possessions consist of six spinning wheels, prison dishes, a can of goat's milk, six homespun loin-cloths and towels, and my reputation which cannot be worth much."

The first public welcome he got in Europe was on behalf of the students of Marseilles, who had organized a reception in honour of the "spiritual ambassador of India". In reply Gandhi addressed them as friends and fellow students: "Since I visited France as a student in 1890, some greater and permanent links between you and

me have been formed. The forger of these links is your own distinguished countryman, Romain Rolland, who constituted himself an interpreter of the humble message that I have been trying to deliver for the last thirty years or more. I have learnt something of the traditions of your country, and of the teachings of Rousseau and Victor Hugo, and on my entering upon my mission—very difficult mission in London—it heartens me to find a warm welcome from you fellow students."

Crowds had lined even the streets of Marseilles to greet him but a correspondent of *Daily Mail* represented that the reception was by rebellious Indian students. Without caring to print any relevant extract from the speech, he had said that Gandhi preached hatred towards British rule. This correspondent who travelled with Gandhi from Marseilles to Boulogne was asked to point out a single sentence in corroboration of his statement. "I was surprised that you brought in politics," he said in self-defence. "You must understand," said Gandhi, "that I cannot isolate politics from the deepest things of my life, for the simple reason that my politics are not corrupt, they are inextricably bound up with non-violence and truth. As I have said often enough, I would far rather that India perished than that she won freedom at the sacrifice of truth." There were vague insinuations which again the journalist could not substantiate. "I may tell you that I have a sense of humour which saves me from annoyance over these things," he said. "If I was lacking in it, I should have gone mad by now. For instance, I should go mad over this article of yours. It is up to me to say that you have packed this article with things which are far from truth, and I should have nothing to do with you. But I don't do so and would continue to give you an interview as often as you come."

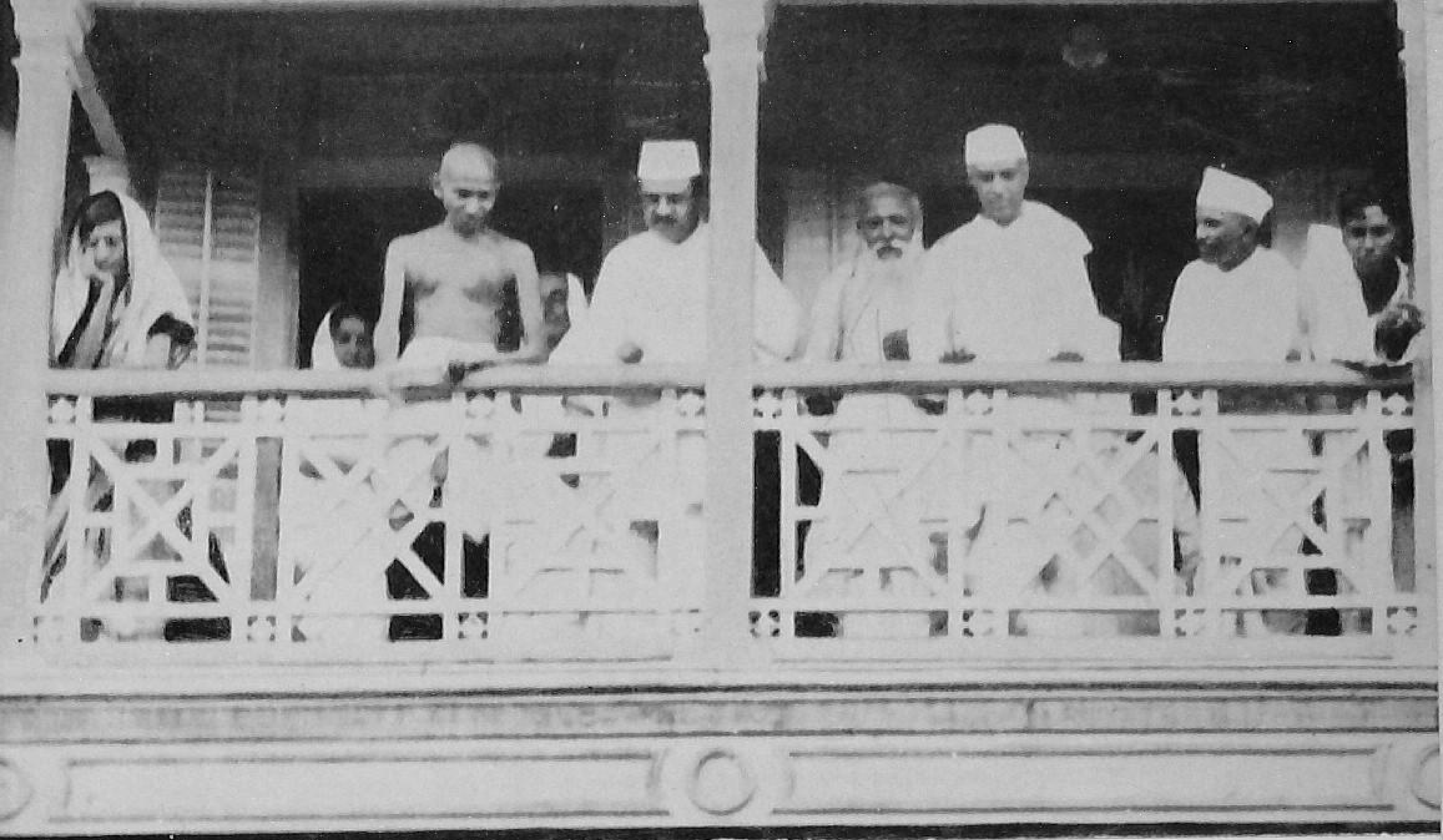
But it was not only the die-hard press that misrepresented him. Mr. Slocombe drew upon his imagination and represented Gandhi as prostrating himself before the Prince of Wales, when he came to India. "Mr. Slocombe," said Gandhi, "I should have expected you to know better. This does not do any credit to your imagination even. I would bend the knee before the poorest scavenger, the poorest untouchable in India, for having participated in crushing him for centuries, I would even take the dust off his feet. But I would not prostrate myself, not even before the King, much less before the Prince of Wales, for the simple reason that he represented

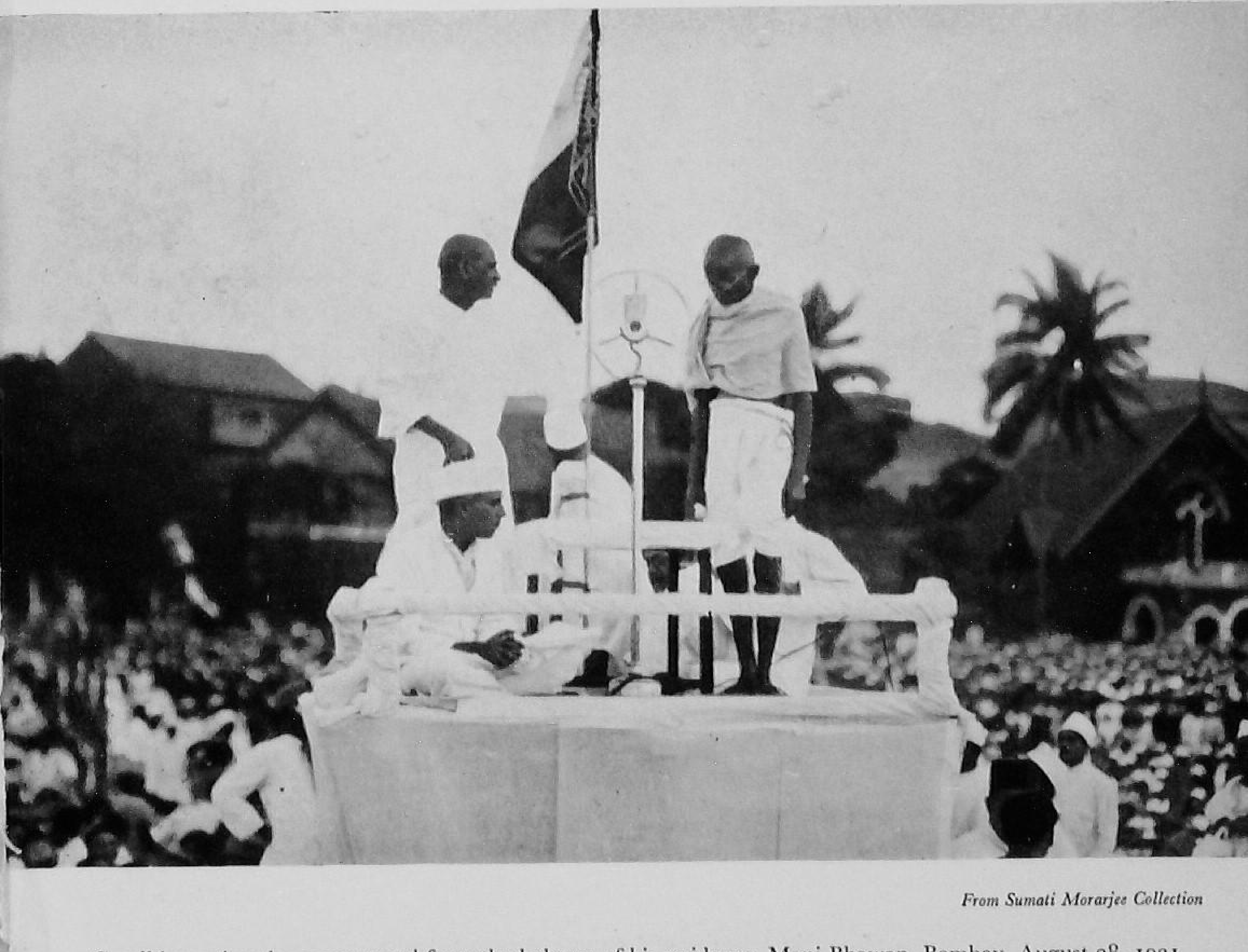
insolent might. I may allow myself be crushed by an elephant but not prostrate myself before him, but should prostrate myself before an ant for having even unconsciously trodden upon it."

For Fleet Street, Gandhi was the best news value in the world. The ground for his reception in England was prepared through grotesque stories. Miss Muriel Lester, Gandhi's hostess, was pestered by a continuous stream of callers from the film world, gramophone companies, and photographers. The accounts in the papers carried trivialities and gross representation of him. The *Children's Newspaper* heralded Gandhi as a "simpleton"; *Truth* referred to him as a "humbug"; neither were the communists less eager to interpret him "dialectically":

"The Indian princes, landlords and capitalists are using Gandhi, who poses as a saint and a holy man, as their cunning agent. He is coming here to enter into a closer alliance with the British imperialists and to secure further rights for the Indian capitalists. His whole life has been a mass of deceit. He has pretended to be non-violent, but he has always taken an active part in all the wars of British capitalism. This Gandhi is attempting to throw dust in the eyes of the British workers by staying as a friend and guest at Kingsley Hall in the East End of London. He is pretending in this way to be the friend of workers, whereas he is one of the greatest enemies of workers and peasants in India. The dramatic tactics of his not putting on a shirt and living on vegetables and goat's milk should not mislead the working class. Such tactics are adopted to serve the ends of capitalist interests in the East."

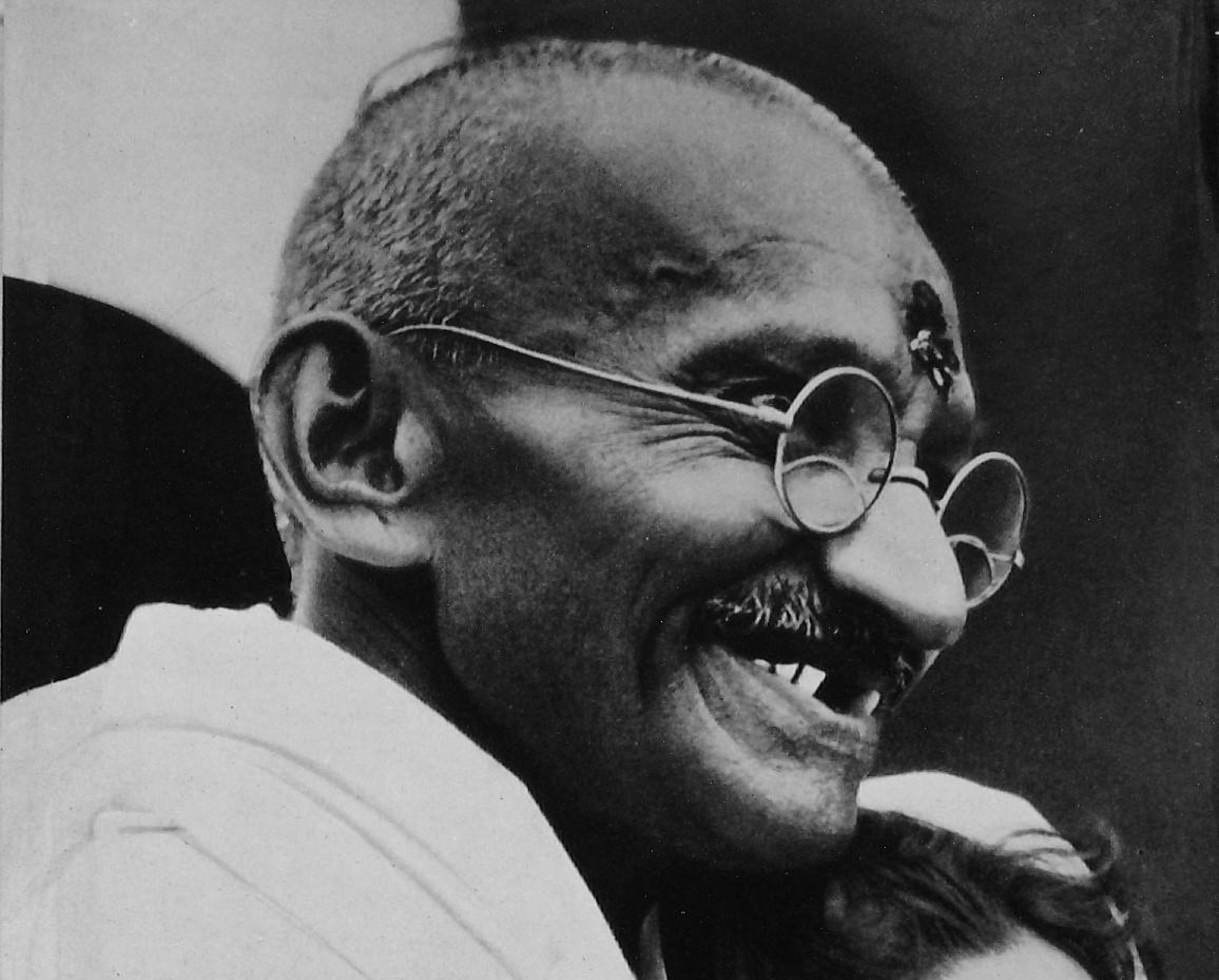
On Saturday, September 12, Gandhi landed at Folkestone and came by road to London. There was a public reception at Friends' Meeting House in Euston Road and Laurence Housman stepped forward to welcome Gandhi, "guest of the nation": "We welcome you as bringing something which is not generally understood, the unification of politics and religion. In churches we are all sinners, but in politics every one else is a sinner—that is a correct description of our daily life, and you have come to call upon us to search our hearts and to declare what our religion is. You are a strange man. You are strange to many, even in your own country. You are stranger to the people in my country. You are so sincere that you make some of us suspicious, and you are so simple that you bewilder some of us." Over a thousand persons representing the





From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi greeting the eager crowd from the balcony of his residence, Mani Bhawan, Bombay, August 28, 1931
Addressing a meeting on the eve of his departure for R.T.C., Esplanade Maidan, Bombay



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

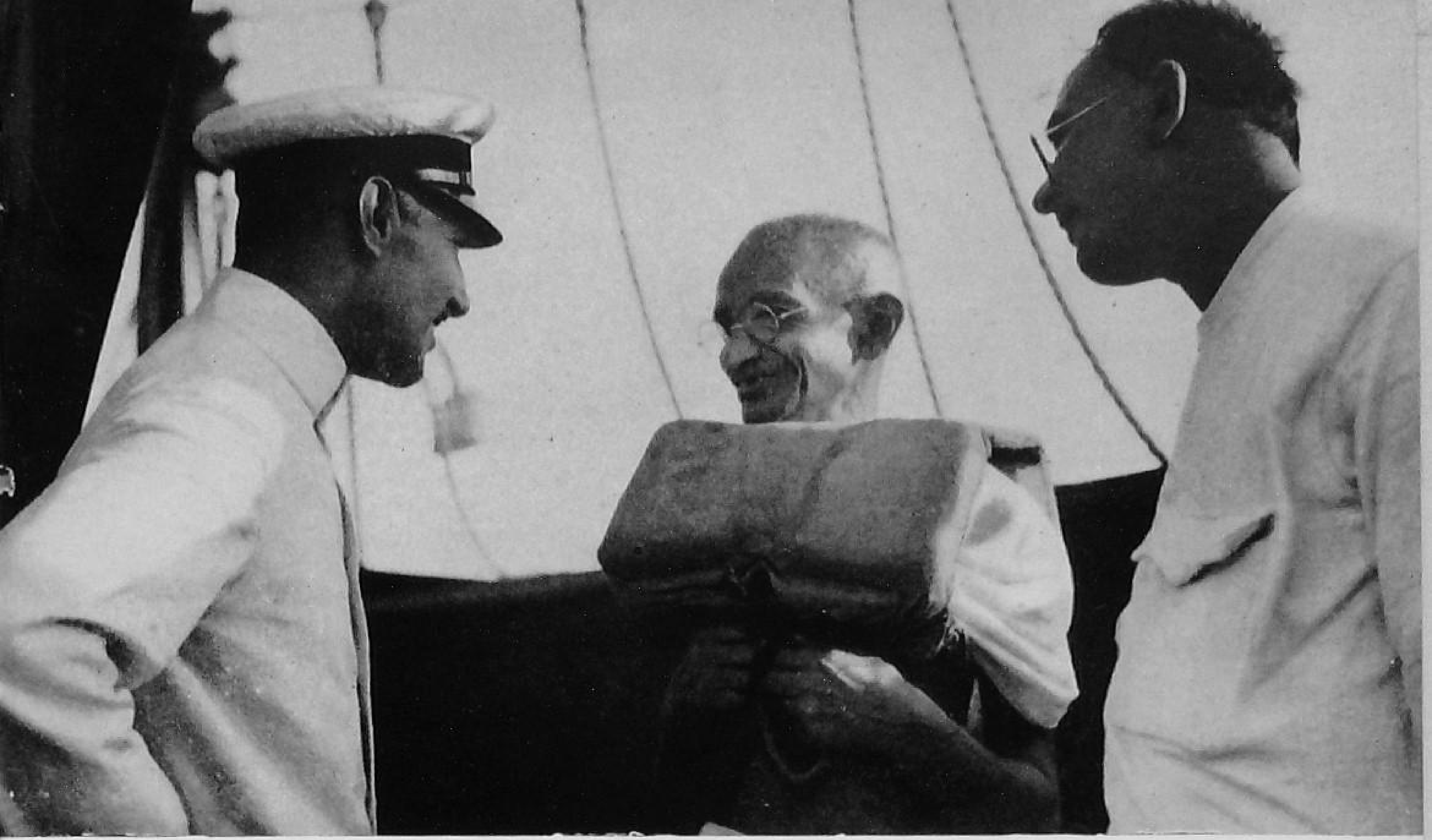
Gandhi on the day of departure, August 29, 1931

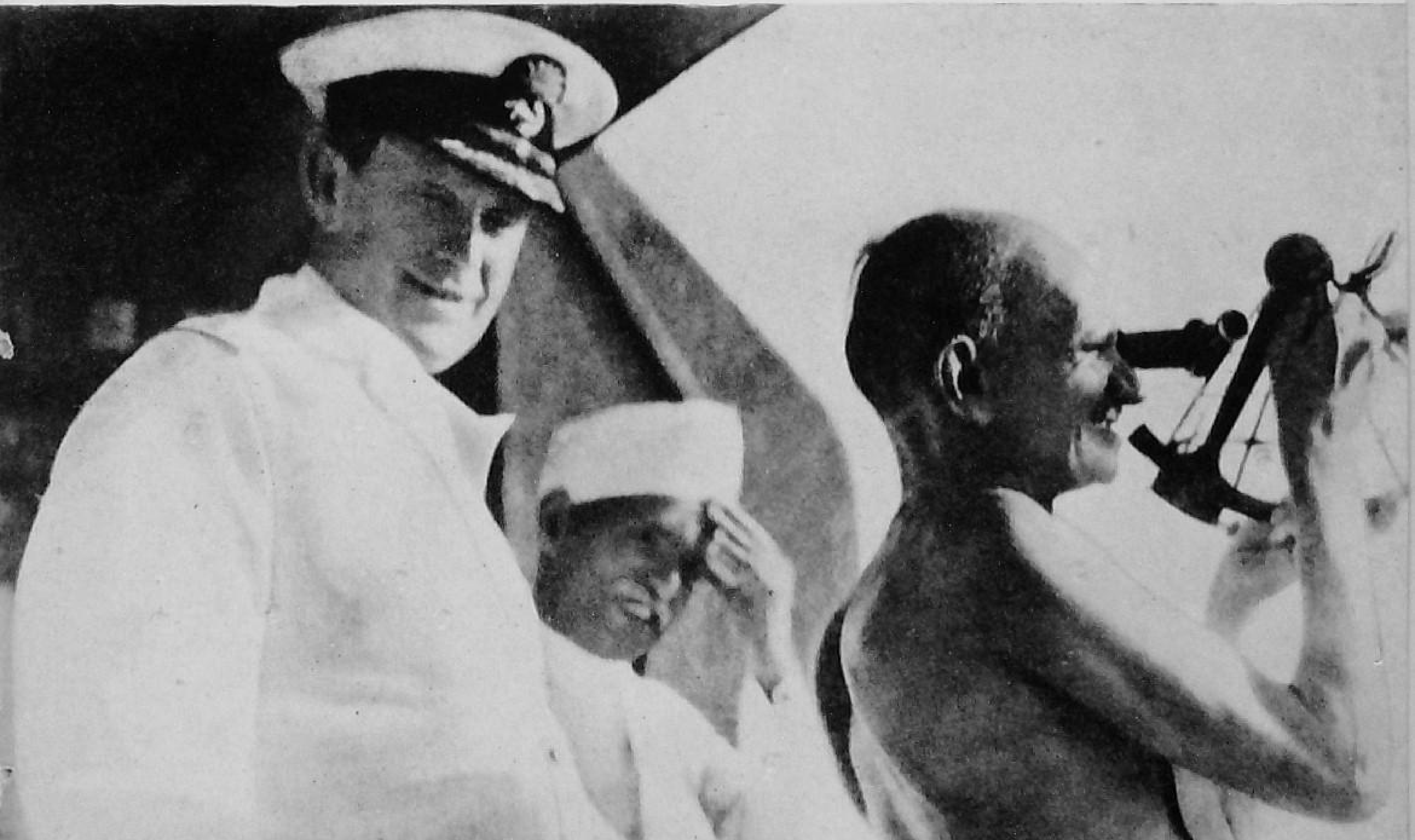
Courtesy : N. J. Nalawala

Gandhi, Kasturbai, Mrs. Naidu, Malaviya at the mole, Bombay
Bidding farewell to his countrymen from the promenade deck of S.S. *Rajaputana*

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

During the voyage





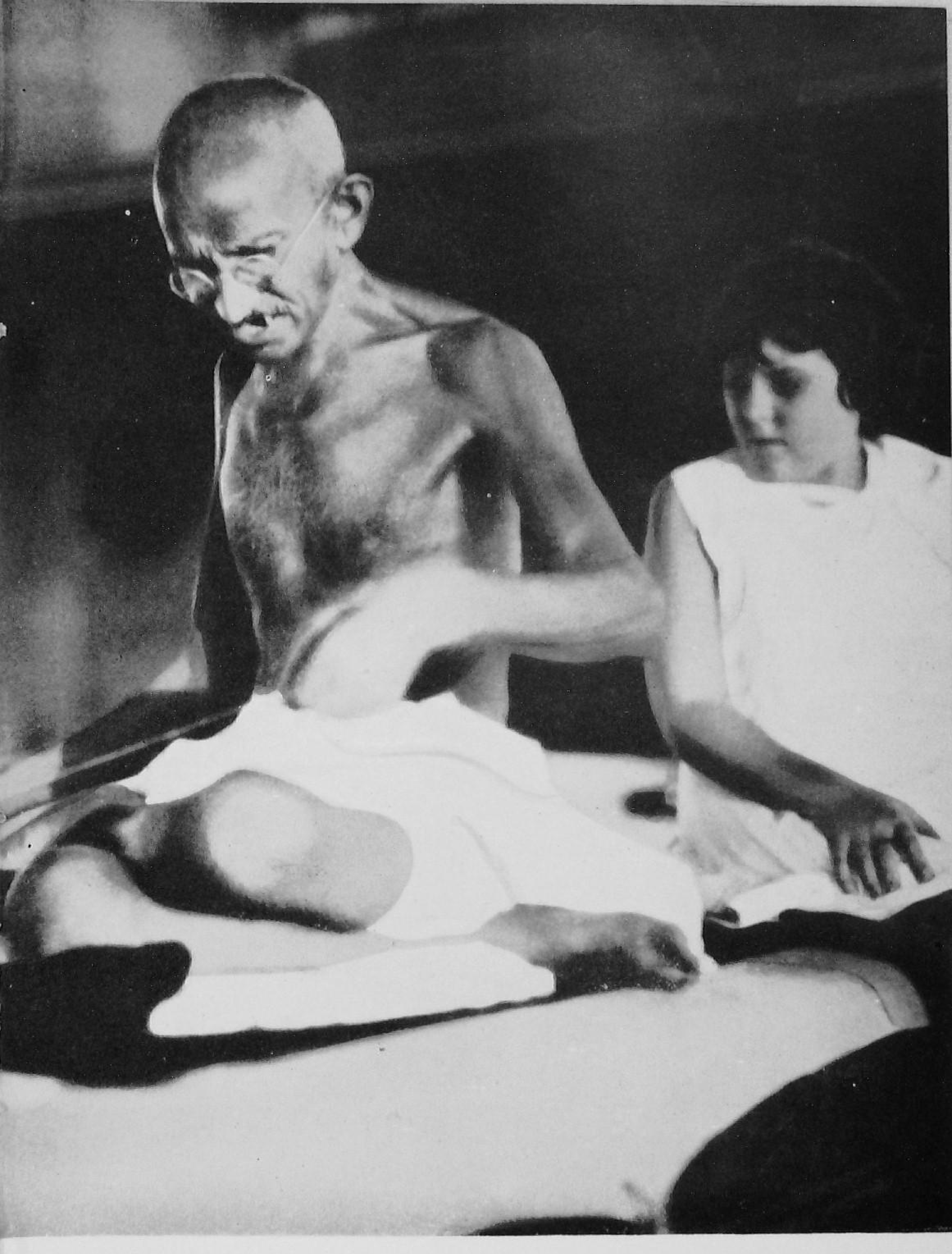
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi receiving instructions on lifeboat practice from Capt. Morton Jack

On the captain's bridge

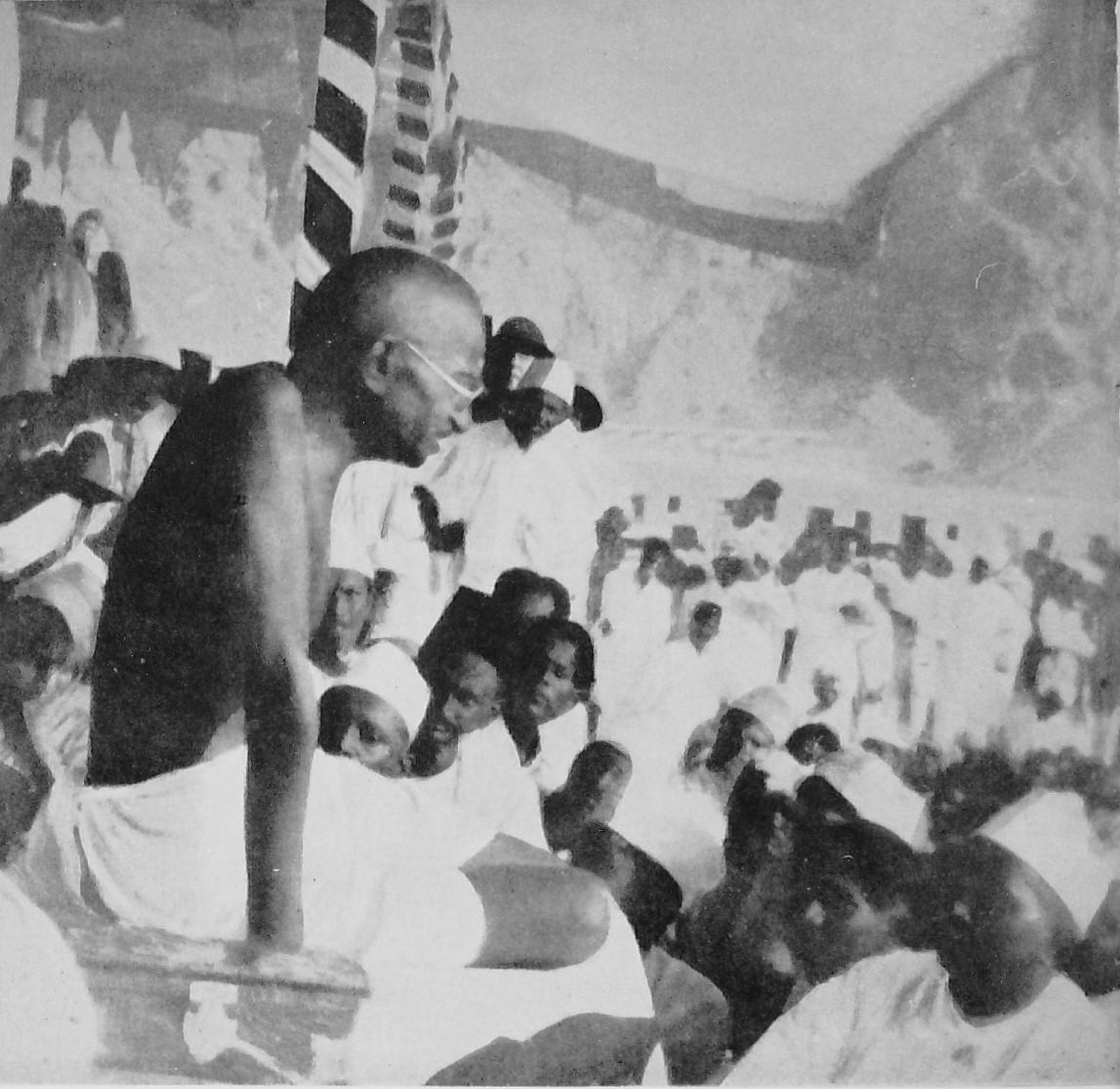
Courtesy : Kusumbehn Desai

Dictating letters to his secretary, Mahadev Desai
Gandhi, Mahadev and Mirabehn at spinning



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi spinning and cracking jokes with the children



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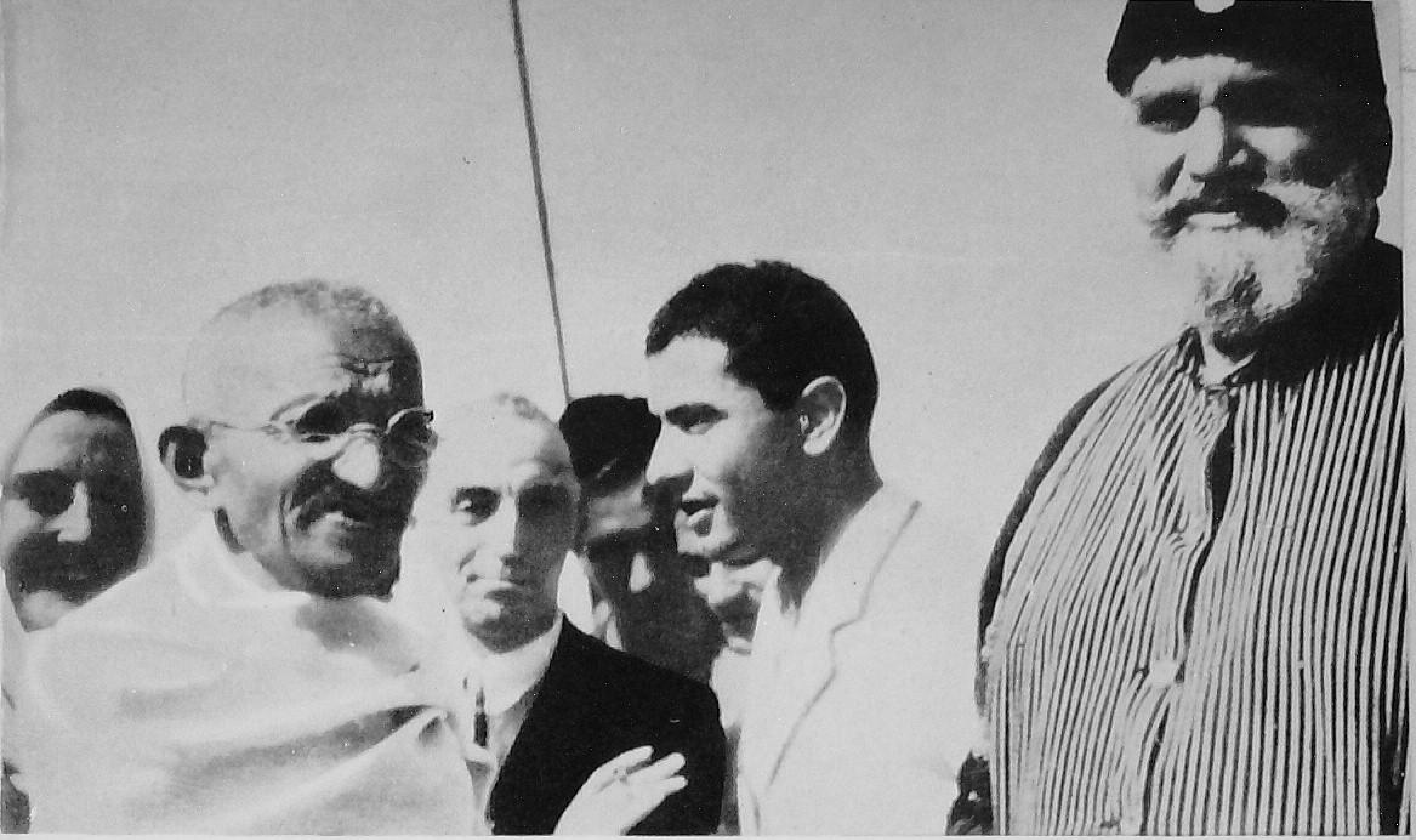
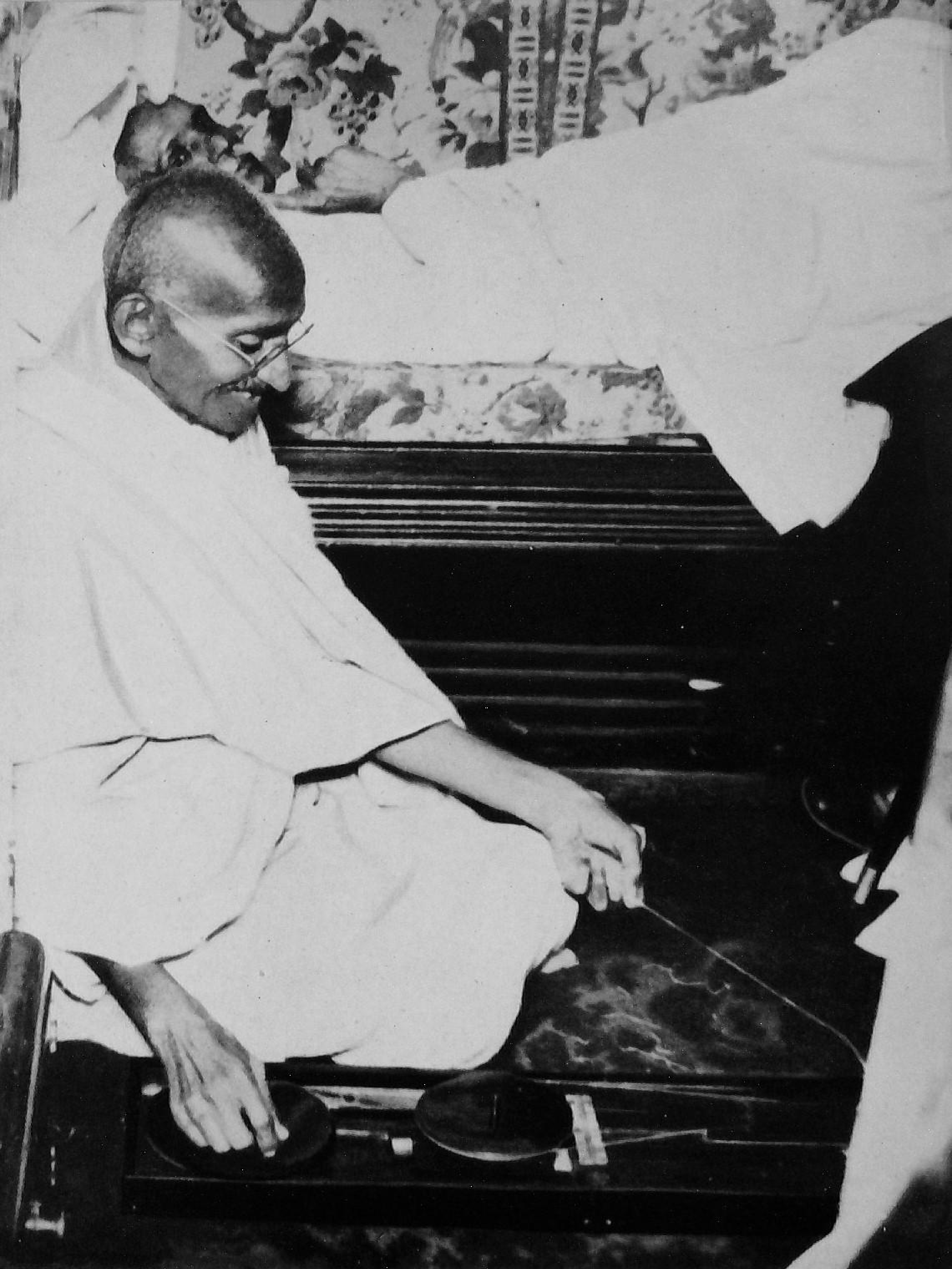
Gandhi addressing a meeting at Aden



Courtesy : Kusumbehn Desai

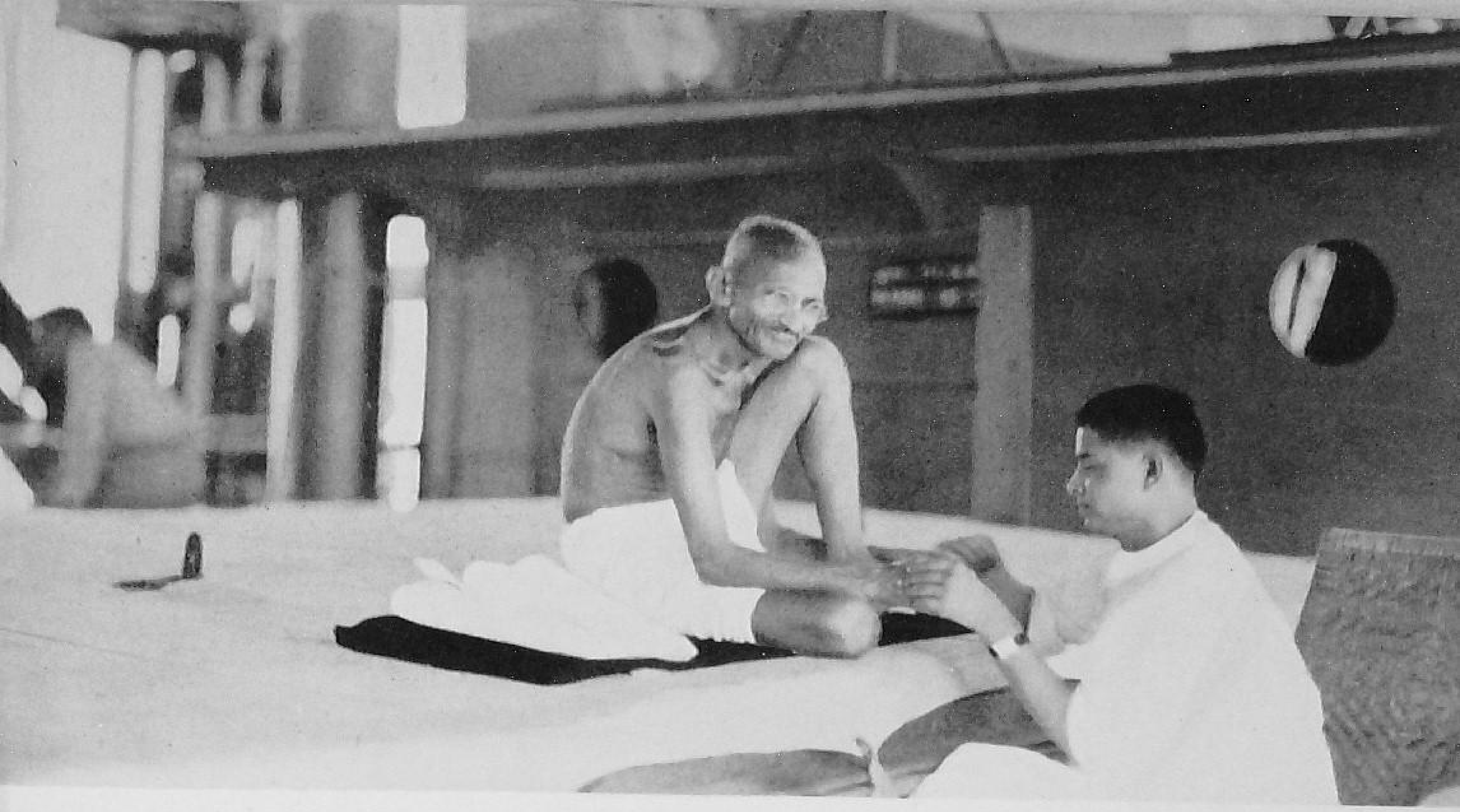
Gandhi with Shaukat Ali who came aboard at Port Said

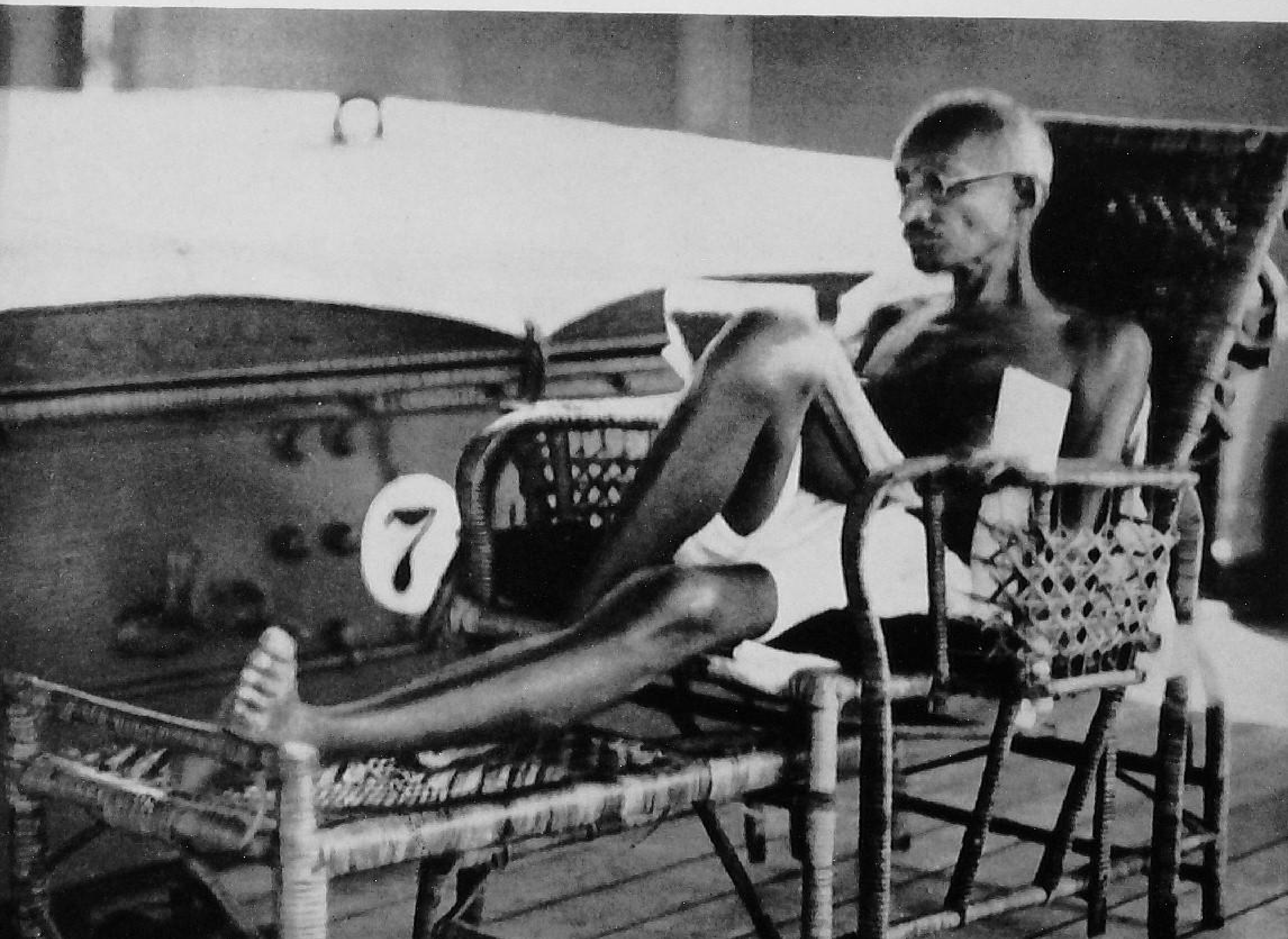
Conversing with the passengers while spinning



Courtesy: Kusumbehn Desai

In Malaviya's cabin





Courtesy: N. J. Nalawala

Devadas cutting his father's nails
Gandhi at work on the sundeck

Courtesy : N. J. Nalawala

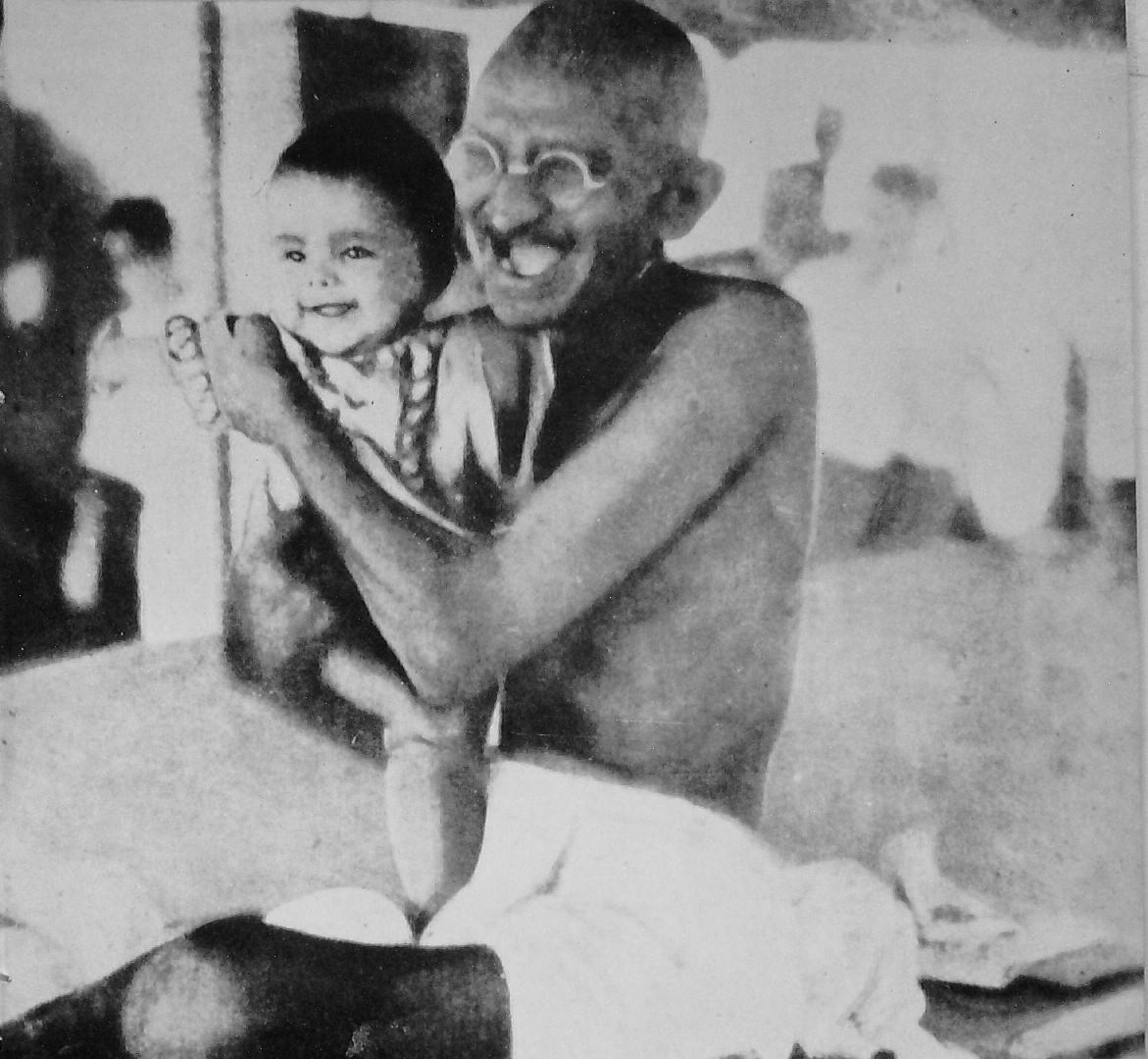
Gandhi perusing his secretary's report

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi writing with his left hand

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Napping on the deck



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi playing with a child

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Away from India

churches, political parties, arts, literature, trade unions, and women's organizations attended the function. Gandhi, tired by the journey, replied to the address without emotion and gesture. He explained the Congress aims and appealed for the dumb and the semi-starved millions of India.

It was raining as Gandhi, accompanied by Miss Lester, made his way eastwards, but in Bow crowds were assembled inside and outside Kingsley Hall to welcome him; the Mayor of Poplar, aldermen and borough councillors, clergymen, teachers, doctors and lawyers, workmen, neighbours and friends. Gandhi greeted them all and then he went up to the flat roof where five of the small cell rooms and bathroom were allocated to him, and his entourage.

On Sunday he was to give a talk to America at 6.30 p.m. The sitting-room at Kingsley Hall was full of an excited crowd of journalists and radio specialists. He made no preparations for his broadcast and sat finishing his supper, talking to his friends on the roof. Kingsley Hall was on the air but still he sat upstairs talking. Miss Lester came in alone and began her introductory five minutes' talk. Four and a half minutes had gone by when the door opened and he walked in and took Miss Lester's chair. She turned the microphone towards him, and he touched it rather gingerly.

"Do I talk into this thing?" he inquired in a low voice, which was nevertheless heard in California. Then there was silence. He shut his eyes, bent his head and began to speak. It was his first broadcast talk and it reached "clear as a bell over the ocean".

He spoke for half an hour. The means adopted by the Indians in their fight for liberty, he said, had not been adopted by any other people of whom we have any record. "Not violence, not bloodshed, not diplomacy as one understands it nowadays, but purely and simply truth and non-violence. No wonder that the attention of the world is directed towards this attempt to lead a successful, bloodless revolution." He would wait for ages rather than seek to attain the independence of India through bloody means. "I feel in the innermost recess of my heart, after a political experience extending over an unbroken period of close upon thirty-five years, that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. It is seeking a way out, and I flatter myself with the belief that perhaps it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungering world."

The Monday papers were full of Gandhi. Even the hostile press advertised the "Mahatma" by publishing numerous portraits of him. He was flooded with letters from all parts of Britain and the continent, giving him a welcome and expressing sympathy for his mission. "I have read with the greatest interest in *The Times* this morning the address you delivered at the Friends' Meeting House and the broadcast message to New York," wrote an admirer. "It will give me much pleasure if you accept the enclosed cheque of £50 as an expression of sympathy with you and your teaching." A typical letter from Lancashire said: "May I say or need I say that I, as a Lancashire cotton working man, who is to some extent suffering through the action of the Indian Congress leaders, have a profound admiration for Mr. Gandhi and a great many of my fellow workers share that spirit of admiration for him?" A prohibitionist wrote: "You are by far our greatest leader and the greatest Christian, for all others are beaten with liquor devils." Crozier sent his book, *A Word to Gandhi,* with a note, "Mr. Gandhi will be surprised to find in a military man an admirer of his."

Before the Round Table Conference met, Labour Government had been replaced by the National Government and the financial crisis had diverted attention from Indian affairs. In welcoming the delegates to the first meeting of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee on September 7, Ramsay MacDonald, the Premier, said that the next week or so he might be "largely absorbed in other matters". Lord Sankey remained chairman of the committee and MacDonald chairman of the conference. "All schools of thought are represented round this table with one exception," observed Lord Sankey. "That exception will cease to exist this day week, when we shall welcome Mahatma Gandhi."

On September 8, when Gandhi was shown a Reuter's news that the Federal Structure Sub-Committee was postponed till Monday the 14th, he replied: "If the meeting is held on Monday, I will be in the most embarrassing position. Monday is my day of silence. When I took the vow, I made three exceptions: first, if I am in distress and can only be assisted by my speaking; second, if some one else is distressed; third, exceptional circumstances such as an unexpected call from the Viceroy or other high official who must be seen in the interest of the cause." He added that his appearance at the committee on Monday next could only come under the third

exception, but only by a considerable stretch of meaning, seeing that it was not sudden and unexpected.

On Monday, September 14, Gandhi attended the meeting of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee over which Lord Sankey presided. Immediately to the left of the chairman sat Gandhi and to the right sat Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India. Gandhi did not speak during the proceedings as it was his day of silence. But occasionally he wrote a brief question and handed it to Lord Sankey, who wrote his answer and handed it back. His immediate companions were Malaviya, Sastri, Sapru and Jayakar. He followed the proceedings intently and was carrying a flask of goat's milk which was his only nourishment until evening.

The committee meeting was resumed on September 15, when it was marked by keen interest as Gandhi was to speak on that day putting the Congress demand for the first time before the Round Table Conference. He was the first speaker and spoke seated, in slow sentences for forty-five minutes. The speech was not prepared but now and then he referred to his notes. He said at the outset that he had come to London absolutely in a spirit of co-operation, and to strive to his utmost to find out points of agreement. But he knew that there were fundamental differences of opinion between the Government and the Congress, and perhaps vital differences between the other delegates and himself. He read out the Karachi Congress resolution, and stated that the Premier's announcement of the Government policy fell far short of its demands. But as he was coming to the conference he thought that it might be possible for him to convince the British ministers that "India is a valuable partner not held by force but by the silken cord of love." In conclusion he said: "I would love to go away from the shores of the British Isles with the conviction that there was to be an honourable and equal partnership between Great Britain and India. It will be my fervent prayer during all the days that I live in your midst that this consummation may be reached."

Sir Geoffrey Corbett, secretary of the Indian delegation, in a personal note to Gandhi wrote: "As I listened to the words of wisdom as they dropped from your lips I felt proud to belong to a delegation of which you are a member."

Among those who spoke after Gandhi were Malaviya, Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Reading.

On September 16, Gandhi explained tersely the Indian demand at a special meeting of Labour M.P.s in the House of Commons. He combated the preconceived notions of educated Britons who were systematically being taught false history. He placed before the representatives of the working men the poverty aspect of the Indian question. "I want to disabuse your minds of the notion that the masses of India are enamoured of Pax Britannica. The truth is that they are anxious to throw off the British yoke, because they do not want to starve. And what else can happen when in a much more prosperous country like yours, your Prime Minister does not draw more than fifty times the average per capita income, whereas in India the Viceroy gets something like five thousand times the average income of an Indian. And if the average income is so low you can understand that the actual income in a vast number of cases must be nil." The Labour M.P.s were all the while thinking of their own unemployed, and their questions centred round the problem of Lancashire cloth. "Tell me," he said, "is India morally bound to buy Lancashire cloth whilst she can produce her own? Does not Lancashire owe any amends to India?"

The meeting with the members of the other parties was livelier still. Here he put the Congress demand strongly. "Without a control over defence and external affairs, it is no independence that we would get, it would not be even a mild form of self-government. It will be a mere husk not worth touching." Warming up he said: "Under the present safeguards, 80 per cent of the revenue is to be farmed out to the foreigner and only 20 per cent to be left to us from which we are to run the departments of education, sanitation, etc. I would not touch that independence. I would far rather remain in compulsory subjection and declare myself a rebel than that I should take charge of a Government that I know is bound to declare itself bankrupt in five or ten years. No self-respecting Indian, I venture to tell you, can possibly accept that state of things. I would fight with my blood as a civil resister, I would rather that you took me to your jails and gave me lathi blows than pretend to co-operate with you as a slave."

His second speech in the Federal Structure Sub-Committee delivered on September 17 was in a way a bomb-shell. "I should like to disburden myself of an oppressive feeling that has been growing on me since Monday," he said. "I have endeavoured to study,

as I have not done before, the list of the delegates and the first feeling of oppression that has been coming upon me is that we are not chosen ones of the nation which we should be representing but we are the chosen ones of the Government. I see, as I study the list, and as I know the different parties in India from experience, some very noticeable gaps also; and so I am oppressed with a sense of unreality in connection with our composition. My second reason for feeling a sense of unreality is that these proceedings seem to me to be interminable and to be leading us practically nowhere." He then lodged a "gentle, humble complaint" that the Government had not given the committee the lead which would help them to reach conclusion. He urged the Government to place their cards on the table. "I want them to say what they would do supposing that we appointed them as the arbiters of our destiny. If they would be good enough to seek our advice and opinion, then we should give them our advice and opinion. That would be, in my humble opinion, really a better thing than this state of hopeless uncertainty and endless delay."

Gandhi demanded adult suffrage and suggested indirect election through village panchayats. He opposed the second chambers, and special representation to any interest—untouchables, commerce, labour, landlords, Europeans, Christians and any other minorities than the Sikhs and the Muslims. He was opposed to nomination, but would give power to the elected legislatures to co-opt representatives of such interests if they failed in the elections. He added: "I would trust the constituencies to elect all classes of people and not become clannish or be caste-ridden. The Congress mentality, I may assure you, is absolutely against caste and against the doctrine of superiority and inferiority. The Congress is cultivating a spirit of absolute equality." Regarding the oath of allegiance he said: "If it is to be complete freedom, if it is to be complete independence for India, the oath of allegiance naturally, will be of one character. If it is to be a subject India, then I have no place there."

A significant discussion followed his speech:

Sir Akbar Hydari: May I ask one question? With regard to the 500,000 villages or electorates, would they elect first to the provincial council and then the provincial council elect to the federal legislature, or would you have separate electorates for the provincial council and the federal legislature?

Gandhi: May I suggest, in the first instance, in answer to Sir Akbar Hydari, that if we accept the general outline of the scheme that I have adumbrated, all these things can be settled without the slightest difficulty. But the special question that Sir Akbar has asked I will answer by saying that in the scheme I was trying to propound villages will be electing the electors or the voters: that the village will elect one man, and say, "You will exercise the vote for us." He will become their agent for the election either to the provincial legislatures or to the central legislature.

Gandhi gave a picture of how things were to shape themselves if a national government was to come into being in India. With regard to the question of racial discrimination, he said:

"I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the downtrodden, the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so-called higher classes, and then, subsequently and scientifically, by the British rulers. If we are to lift these people from the mire, then it would be the duty of the national government of India, in order to set its house in order, continually to give preference to these people and even free them from the burdens under which they are being crushed. If the landlords, zamindars, monied men and those who are today enjoying privileges—I do not care whether they are Europeans or Indians—if they find that they are discriminated against, I shall sympathize with them, but I will not be able to help them, even if I could possibly do so, because I would seek their assistance in that process, and without their assistance it would not be possible to raise these people out of the mire.

"Look at the condition, if you will, of the untouchables, if the law comes to their assistance and sets apart miles of territory. At the present moment they hold no land; they are absolutely living at the mercy of the so-called higher castes, and also, let me say, at the mercy of the state. They can be removed from one quarter to another without complaint and without being able to seek the assistance of law. Well, the first act of the legislature will then be to see that in order somewhat to equalize the conditions, these people are given grants freely.

"From whose pockets are these grants to come? Not from the pockets of heaven. Heaven is not going to drop the money for the sake of the state. They will naturally come from the monied classes,

including the Europeans. Will they say that this is discrimination? They will be able to see that this is no discrimination against them just because they are Europeans; it will be discrimination against them because they have got money and the others have no money. It will be a battle between the haves and the have-nots. If that is what is feared, the national Government will not be able to come into being if all these classes hold the pistol at the heads of these dumb millions and say: 'You shall not have a government of your own unless you guarantee our possessions and our rights.'

"I think I have given a sufficient indication of what the Congress stands for and of the implications of this formula that I have now suggested. On no account will they find that there has been discrimination against them because they are English or because they are European or Japanese or belong to any other race. The grounds that will be applicable to them for discrimination will be also the grounds for discrimination against Indian-born citizens.

"I have got another formula also hurriedly drafted, because I drafted it here as I was listening to Lord Reading and to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. It is in connection with existing rights: 'No existing interest legitimately acquired, and not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation in general, shall be interfered with except in accordance with the law applicable to such interests.'

"I certainly have in my mind what you find in the Congress resolution in connection with taking over by the incoming government of obligations that are being today discharged by the British. Just as we claim that these obligations must be examined by an impartial tribunal before they are taken over by us, so should the existing interests be subject to judicial scrutiny when necessary. And there is no question of repudiation but merely of taking over under examination, under audit. We have here some of us who have made a study of the privileges and monopolies enjoyed by the Europeans, but let it not be merely Europeans: there are Indians—I have undoubtedly several Indians in mind—who are today in possession of land which has been practically given away to them not for any service rendered to the nation but for some service rendered, I cannot even say to the Government, for I do not consider that the Government has benefited, but to some official; and if you tell me that those concessions and privileges are not to be examined by the state, I again tell you that it will be impossible to

run the machinery of Government on behalf of the have-nots, on behalf of the dispossessed. Hence, you will see here that there is nothing stated in connection with the Europeans. The second formula also is applicable to Indians, as it is applicable, say, to Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas and Sir Phiroze Sethna. If they have obtained concessions which have been obtained because they did some service to the officials of the day and got some miles of land, well, if I had the possession of Government I would quickly dispossess them. I would not consider them because they are Indians, and I would as readily dispossess Sir Hubert Carr or Mr. Benthall, however admirable they are, and however friendly they are to me. The law will be no respecter of persons whatsoever. I give you that assurance. After having received that assurance, I am unable to go any further. So that is really what is implied by 'legitimately acquired'—that every interest must have been taintless, it must be above suspicion, like Caesar's wife, and therefore, we shall expect to examine all these things when they come under the notice of that Government.

"Then you have 'not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation'. I have in mind certain monopolies, legitimately acquired, undoubtedly, but which have been brought into being in conflict with the best interests of the nation. Let me give you an illustration which will amuse you, but which is no natural ground. Take this white elephant which is called New Delhi. Crores have been spent upon it. Suppose that the future Government comes to the conclusion that seeing that we have this white elephant it ought to be turned to some use. Imagine that in old Delhi there is a plague or cholera going on, and we want hospitals for the poor. What are we to do? Do you suppose the national government will be able to build hospitals, and so on? Nothing of the kind. We will take charge of those buildings and put these plague-stricken people in them and use them as hospitals, because I contend that those buildings are in conflict with the best interests of the nation. They do not represent the millions of India. They may be representative of the monied people who are sitting at the table; they may be representative of the Nawab Saheb of Bhopal, or of Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, or of Sir Phiroze Sethna, or of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, but they are not representative of those who lack even a place to sleep and have not even a crust of bread to eat.

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi alighting from S.S. *Rajaputana* at Marseilles, September 11, 1931

TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDY
T. KALLUPPATTY POST
MADURA DT.

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi with the journalists at Marseilles

At Boulogne, accompanied by courteous British detectives—his constant companions

Courtesy : N. J. Nalawala

Gandhi at Folkestone, September 12, 1931

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Greeting Londoners from the balcony of his residence at Kingsley Hall

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi arriving at St. James' Palace, September 14, 1931

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi at the Federal Structure Sub-Committee meeting presided over by Lord Sankey

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Leaving 10, Downing Street

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi with textile workers at Darwen, Lancashire, September 26, 1931

If the national government comes to the conclusion that that place is unnecessary, no matter what interests are concerned, they will be dispossessed, and they will be dispossessed, I may tell you, without any compensation, because, if you want this government to pay compensation it will have to rob Peter in order to pay Paul, and that would be impossible.

"It is a bitter pill which has got to be swallowed, if a government, as Congress conceives it, comes into being. In order to take away something from here, I have no desire to deceive you into the belief that everything will be quite all right. I want, on behalf of the Congress, to lay all the cards on the table."

To keep alive his bond of identity with the millions of India, he span every day without fail. He gave instructions to Mirabehn, who used to serve him his meals, that the daily expenditure on his food should never exceed 1*s.* 6*d.* He wanted to know the price of every item of his menu before partaking of it. The whole day he would be busy and return to Kingsley Hall sometime past midnight. Friends had been demonstrating with him against staying at this place so distant from the palaces and hotels. English admirers had been forthcoming ready to offer their houses in the neighbourhood of St. James's Palace. One day Sir Charles Trevelyan drove down to Kingsley Hall to offer him his house but that suggestion too was not accepted. To identify himself with the working class he lived in East End. "This is real R.T.C. work," he said. "I am getting at the heart of the people of England here."

At half past five in the morning Gandhi went out for an hour's walk in Bow. The walk he usually chose was in parts attractive and in parts full of working men's dwellings. The night-watch was first to greet him; a set of working girls in the room upstairs of a little house would crowd to the window to wave; residents of Kemball and Bishop would gaze at him from their night work as he passed; the navvies dredging the mud would shout their greetings. Some parents lovingly complained that their children insisted on being awakened early morning to say "good morning" to Gandhi when he went out for a walk.

His constant companions were the detectives, Sergeant Evans and Sergeant Rogers, and their zeal and their concern for his safety were unfailing. All sorts of people joined him in his walks and talked on a variety of subjects. Someone asked: "Mr. Gandhi, if sorrow

makes for character does it not prove that nations need war?" He answered: "I think that it is a false doctrine. Sorrow and suffering make for character if they are voluntarily borne, but not if they are imposed. Now the result of a non-violent war would be, indeed, brilliant for all concerned, but in wars experienced in the past it is very clear that they lead soon and inevitably to grossness and cruelty."

"Do you think nothing can prevent another war?" was the next question. "I think the success of my experiment from 1906 to 1931 can," replied Gandhi. "You may say that I am living in a fool's paradise. Perhaps I am. There may be some flaw in it but I cannot see one."

One morning Gandhi visited some tenements on Eagling Road, in East End. He wanted to know what work the men round about did, the rent of the houses, the work of the sanitary authorities, and what provision was made for the care of the family during unemployment. The inhabitants had no idea that he was coming but all were eager to display every corner of their little dwellings for him to inspect, and reply to his questions.

He became increasingly popular with the East-enders. A neighbour crippled with rheumatism sent a message to Gandhi that he could not leave his home but wanted very much to see him. Next morning at eight, Gandhi went to chat with him round his kitchen fire. A blind man in St. Andrew's Hospital sent him a message of greeting and of disappointment at missing him. Two days later the whole ward was spruced up at six in the morning to entertain the honoured guest. "A skinny little bloke with a funny face—that's how the papers had shown Mr. Gandhi to us," said a neighbour. "I took a lot of notice of him because I live just opposite. I watched all his ways. I reckon he is a man you must admire."

On Saturday nights Kingsley Hall was the great rival to many public houses around it. Couples paid their threepence and made merry in the friendly hall. The gaiety ended with all people standing in a circle round the hall, arms crossed, hands clasped, singing "Auld Lang Syne", and dancing forward and backward. This was a function Gandhi attended whenever possible. "Mr. Gandhi, won't you join us in our country dances," asked the merry crowd once. He answered, "Yes, certainly," and then added, pointing to the stick in his hand, "This stick shall be my partner." "This is their

innocent recreation," he explained to a puritan follower. "We need to have an understanding and appreciation of the way of life of those with whom we want to mix. You should not forget that folk-dancing is an ancient established English institution."

He availed himself of an early opportunity to visit Lancashire on September 22. He wanted to meet the people who were hit hard by the boycott movement. "I am pained," he said, "at the unemployment here. But here is no starvation or semi-starvation. In India we have both. If you went to the villages, you would find utter despair in the eyes of the villagers, you would find half-starved skeletons, living corpses. If India could revive them by putting life and food into them in the shape of work, India would help the world. Today India is a curse. You have three million unemployed but we have three hundred million unemployed for half the year. Your average unemployment dole is seventy shillings. Our average income is only seven shillings and six pence a month. Even in your misery, you are comparatively happy. I do not grudge that happiness. I wish well to you all, but do not think of prospering on the tombs of the poor millions of India. I do not want for India an isolated life at all, but I do not want to depend on any country for my food and clothing. Whilst we may devise means for tiding over the present crisis, you should cherish no hope of reviving the old Lancashire trade. Do not attribute your misery to India. Think of the world forces that are powerfully working against you. See things in the dry light of reason."

He stayed for two days in Lancashire and argued the Congress case with the working people. "Do you wish to prosper by stealing their morsel of bread from the mouth of the Indian spinner and weaver, and their hungry children?" he asked the Lancashire mill operatives. Their curiosity was aroused and they asked questions about the agricultural conditions in India and why the standard of living was so poor, and so on. "We understand each other now," they said. "It is a privilege to have seen Mr. Gandhi, a mighty force thrown up by the awakening East."

On September 27 he delivered an address at the Guild-Hall, London, on the significance of voluntary poverty:

"When I found myself drawn into the political coil, I asked myself what was necessary for me, in order to remain untouched by immorality, by untruth, by what is known as political gain. I came

definitely to the conclusion that, if I had to serve the people in whose midst my life was cast and of whose difficulties I was a witness from day to day, I must discard all wealth, all possession.

"I cannot tell you with truth that, when this belief came to me, I discarded everything immediately. I must confess to you that progress at first was slow. And now, as I recall those days of struggle, I remember that it was also painful in the beginning. But, as days went by, I saw that I had to throw overboard many other things which I used to consider as mine, and a time came when it became a matter of positive joy to give up those things. One after another then, by almost geometric progression, things slipped away from me. And, as I am describing my experiences, I can say a great burden fell off my shoulders, and I felt that I could now walk with ease and do my work also in the service of my fellow men with great comfort and still greater joy. The possession of anything then became a troublesome thing and a burden.

"Exploring the cause of that joy, I found that if I kept anything as my own, I had to defend it against the whole world. I found that there were many people who did not have the thing, although they wanted it; and I would have to seek police assistance also if some hungry famine-stricken people, finding me in a lonely place, wanted not only to divide the thing with me but to dispossess me. And I said to myself: if they want it and would take it, they do so not from any malicious motive, but they would do it because theirs was a greater need than mine.

"And I said to myself: possession seems to me to be a crime; I can only possess certain things when I know that others, who also want to possess similar things, are able to do so. But we know—every one of us can speak from experience—that such a thing is an impossibility. Therefore, the only thing that can be possessed by all is non-possession, not to have anything whatsoever. Or, in other words, a willing surrender.

"Now you see that there is a daily conflict between what you and we understand today as civilization, and the state which I am picturing to you as a state of bliss and a desirable state. On the other hand, the basis of culture for civilization is understood to be the multiplication of your wants. If you have one room, you will desire to have two rooms, three rooms, the more the merrier. And similarly, you will want to have as much furniture as you can put

in your house, and so on endlessly. The more you possess, the better culture you represent, or some such thing. I am putting it, perhaps, not as nicely as the advocates of that civilization would put it, but I am putting it to you in the manner I understand it.

"And, on the other hand, you find the less you possess, the less you want, the better you are. And better for what? Not for enjoyment of this life, but for enjoyment of personal service to the fellow beings; service to which you dedicate yourselves, body, soul and mind . . . Even the body is not yours. It has been given to you as a temporary possession and it can also be taken from you by Him who has given it to you.

"Therefore, having that absolute conviction in me, such must be my constant desire that this body also may be surrendered at the will of God, and while it is at my disposal, must be used not for dissipation, not for self-indulgence, not for pleasure, but merely for service and service the whole of your waking hours. And if this is true with reference to the body, how much more with reference to clothing and other things that we use?

"And those who have followed out this vow of voluntary poverty to the fullest extent possible—to reach absolute perfection is an impossibility, but the fullest possible extent for a human being—those who have reached the ideal of that state, testify that when you dispossess yourself of everything you have, you really possess all the treasures of the world."

With a flash of humour he said: "But you will say, 'Mr. Gandhi, you are wearing a piece of cloth: to whom does it belong?' And I shall have to admit that, as long as I have a body, I must wrap it with something. But, if anyone wants to take it off me, he can have it. I shan't call in the police!" A body of eighteen policemen with whom the British Government had provided Gandhi, burst into a roar of laughter as he turned a look on them, and the whole audience followed suit.

Gandhi's sixty-second birthday was celebrated on October 2 in East End. Sixpences were given by the inmates of Kingsley Hall for his birthday party. The menu was very simple and they all squatted on the ground to give company to their honoured guest. A small girl wrote an essay on his birthday: "St. Francis of Assissi was called the little poor man of Assissi. He was just like Gandhi in every way. They both loved nature, such as the children, birds

and flowers. He wears loin-cloth like St. Francis did, when he was on the earth. Gandhi and St. Francis were sons of rich merchants. One night while St. Francis was feasting with his followers, he remembered the poor Italians. He ran out and gave up all his rich clothes and all his money to the poor and dressed himself in old sacks. Gandhi did the very same thing. He gave up all his rich gay life to the poor Indian people."

The birthday was full of pleasant and unpleasant memories. On that day the non-official Minorities Conference, presided over by Gandhi, gave its verdict against the non-communal stand of the Congress. Special representation for all minorities was accepted by the majority, Gandhi dissenting. The work of the conference was proceeding at a snail's pace and there was no decisive move on the part of the Government. He gave vent to his feelings before five hundred admirers headed by Fenner Brockway who had gathered together to honour him on his birthday. "I am endeavouring to show that the Congress is in earnest, and I am here to vindicate the honour of the Congress, the honour of India, by asking for everything that is included in the Congress mandate. There are some, I admit, who are afraid of talking about the freedom of India, if the British protection, so called, is withdrawn from India. But I assure you that the starving millions and those who have become politically conscious entertain no such fear and they are ready to pay the price for the sake of freedom."

From four in the morning when he rose till after midnight when he retired, Gandhi was incessantly busy. Apart from the conference and the office work at Knightsbridge, he had to address meetings, write for newspapers, speak to people, and meet the distinguished personalities. "I know something about you and felt something in you of a kindred spirit," said George Bernard Shaw to Gandhi when he dropped in at Knightsbridge for a friendly talk. He gave the palm to Gandhi and called himself "Mahatma Minor". "You and I belong to a very small community on earth," Shaw remarked. They sat together for an hour and held talks on a variety of topics—ethnographical, religious, social, political and economical. "Does not the Round Table Conference try your patience," Shaw asked casually. "It requires more than the patience of a Job," sighed Gandhi. "The whole thing is a huge camouflage and the harangues that we are treated to are meant only to mark time. Why

not, I ask them, make a clean breast and announce your policy and let us make our choice? But it does not seem to be in the English political nature to do so. It must go by tortuous ways."

By the end of October the general election was held, which went in favour of the Tories. Sapru and other Indian delegates made a demand that the British Government should make immediately a statement of their policy in regard to central responsibility in the future Government of India. On November 5, a second National Government with Ramsay MacDonald as Premier was announced. There was yet no indication of the Government's attitude, but as a sop the Indian delegates were invited to Buckingham Palace to shake hands with King George. It was now discretely whispered to Gandhi that he should wear proper court dress on this occasion. He said that he would wear only his familiar loin-cloth and if this was not acceptable, he could not heed the summons to the royal presence. He was equally frank with the King. When His Majesty told Gandhi that he was a "good man" when he had met him during his visit to South Africa and up to 1918, but then something had gone wrong with him, Gandhi maintained a dignified silence. When, however, the King questioned, "Why did you boycott my son," he replied: "Not your son, Your Majesty, but the official representative of the British Crown." Further, when the King proceeded to tell him that a rebellion could not be tolerated and had to be put down and the King's Government kept going, Gandhi could not allow the statement to go unchallenged. With his characteristic courtesy and firmness, he interpolated: "Your Majesty won't expect me to argue the point with you." Some one referred to his scanty dress and he replied with a twinkle in his eyes: "The King had enough on for both of us."

On November 9, Gandhi received a telegram from the Congress Working Committee to the effect that his continuance in the conference appeared to be unnecessary. The committee left the final decision with him but drew his attention to the rapidly worsening situation in Bengal, the Frontier Province, U.P. and elsewhere. The committee considered that his early return to India was desirable and a long continental tour would be inadvisable. He dropped the idea of visiting Ireland, Germany, Denmark and several other places which did not directly lie on the route to India, but he could not leave his work. He declared in the conference: "I shall

be here as long as I am desired, because I do not want to revive civil disobedience. I want to turn the truce that was arrived at Delhi into a permanent settlement. For heaven's sake, give me, a frail man sixty-two years gone, a little bit of a chance."

The work of the conference was mainly done by the Federal Structure Sub-Committee and the Minorities Sub-Committee, and Gandhi was a member of both. He spoke on all the main questions, citing the pertinent Congress resolutions. In the first speech he had given the history of the Congress and explained what it stood for. In the second speech he had dealt with the adult suffrage and in successive speeches with other important questions. He demanded control by the federal legislature of the army and foreign affairs. He wanted a supreme court in India, with no appeal to the Privy Council. He objected to the provisions suggested in regard to commercial discrimination and to the proposed financial safeguards, and stated the Congress view, that before they were taken over by a national government, financial obligations of the Government of India would have to be scrutinized. Referring to the extempore speeches of Gandhi in the conference, *New York Times* wrote that it had introduced to them to a way of speech which would become familiar to the whole world before the conference was over.

With the utmost persistence, he took part in the communal negotiations. Formal meetings and informal conversations were alike unavailing, and after three adjournments, the third over a period of five weeks, the Minorities Sub-Committee was obliged to report failure to reach settlement. Dr. Ambedkar demanded separate electorates for the Depressed Classes and was supported by the other minorities except the Sikhs. He added that "the Depressed Classes are not anxious, they are not clamorous, they have not started any movement for claiming that there shall be an immediate transfer of power from the British to the Indian people." The Muslim and the Sikh speakers made it clear that they could not commit themselves to the federal scheme until the communal issue had been solved. The Aga Khan led the minorities and presented a memorandum to the Prime Minister. In essence, it claimed, in addition to the maintenance of the statutory rights, special representation through the communal electorates and a declaration of civil rights. Gandhi informed the chairman that he would be agreeable to the Prime Minister giving his decision on the question only so far as

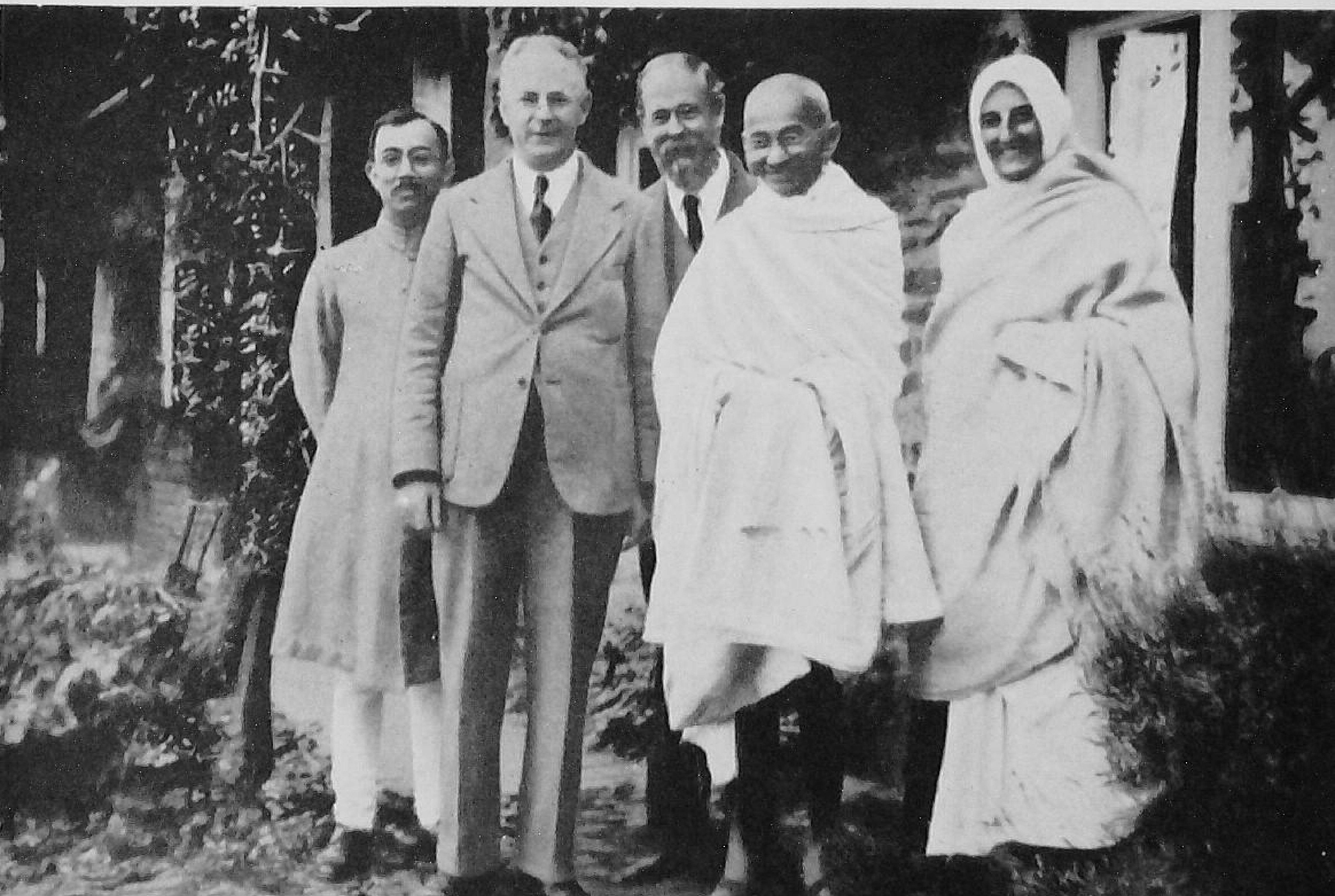
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

After a visit to a textile mill in Lancashire

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi and Lansbury with Kingsley Hall Nursery School children

Planting a tree outside Kingsley Hall, East End



Courtesy : Kusumbehn Desai

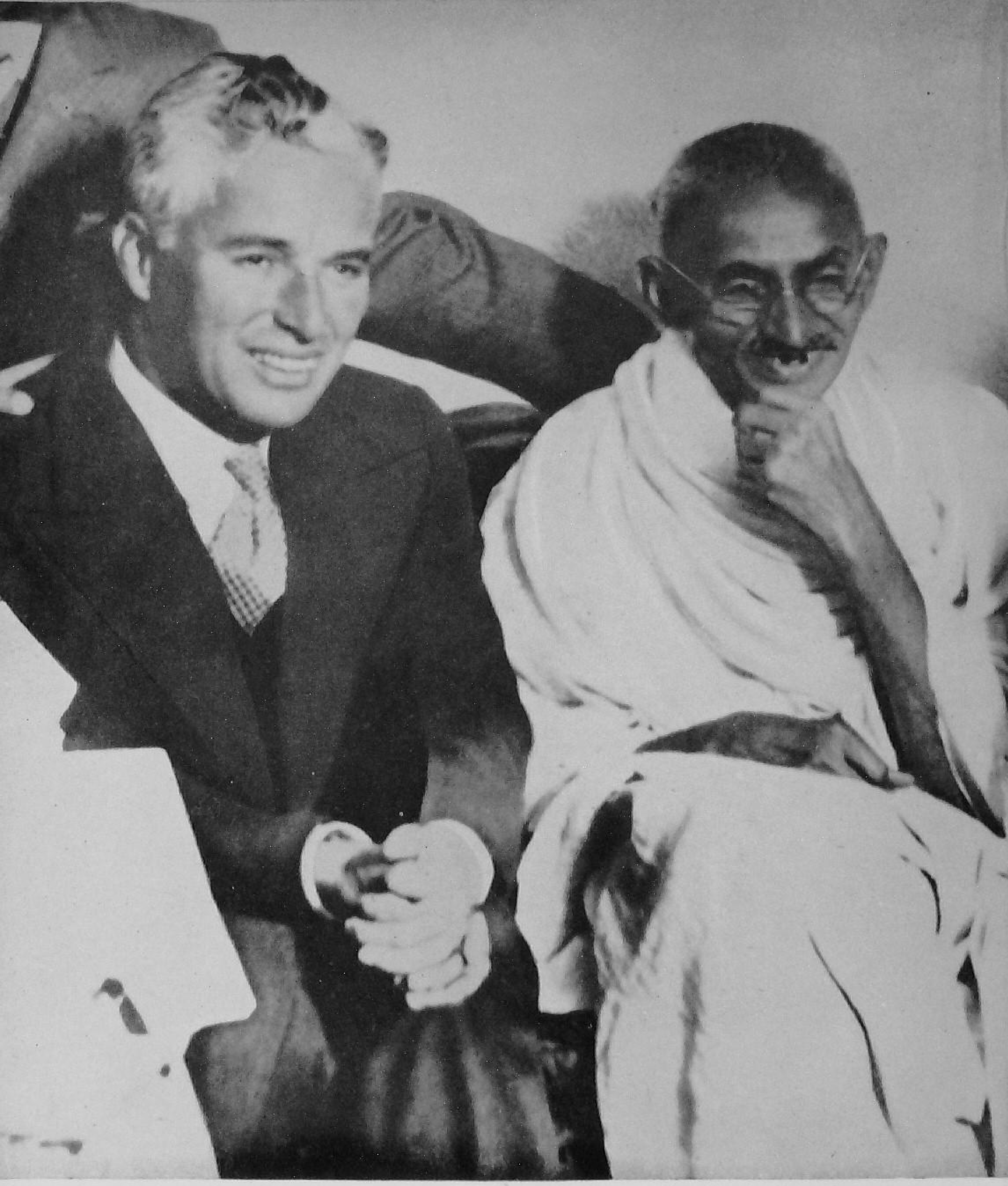
Gandhi amidst East-enders
At Oxford

Costermonger or Pearly King, and his son and daughter ceremoniously offer Gandhi their best oranges *From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi recording his speech on God for Columbia Gramophone Company *Courtesy: Columbia Studio*

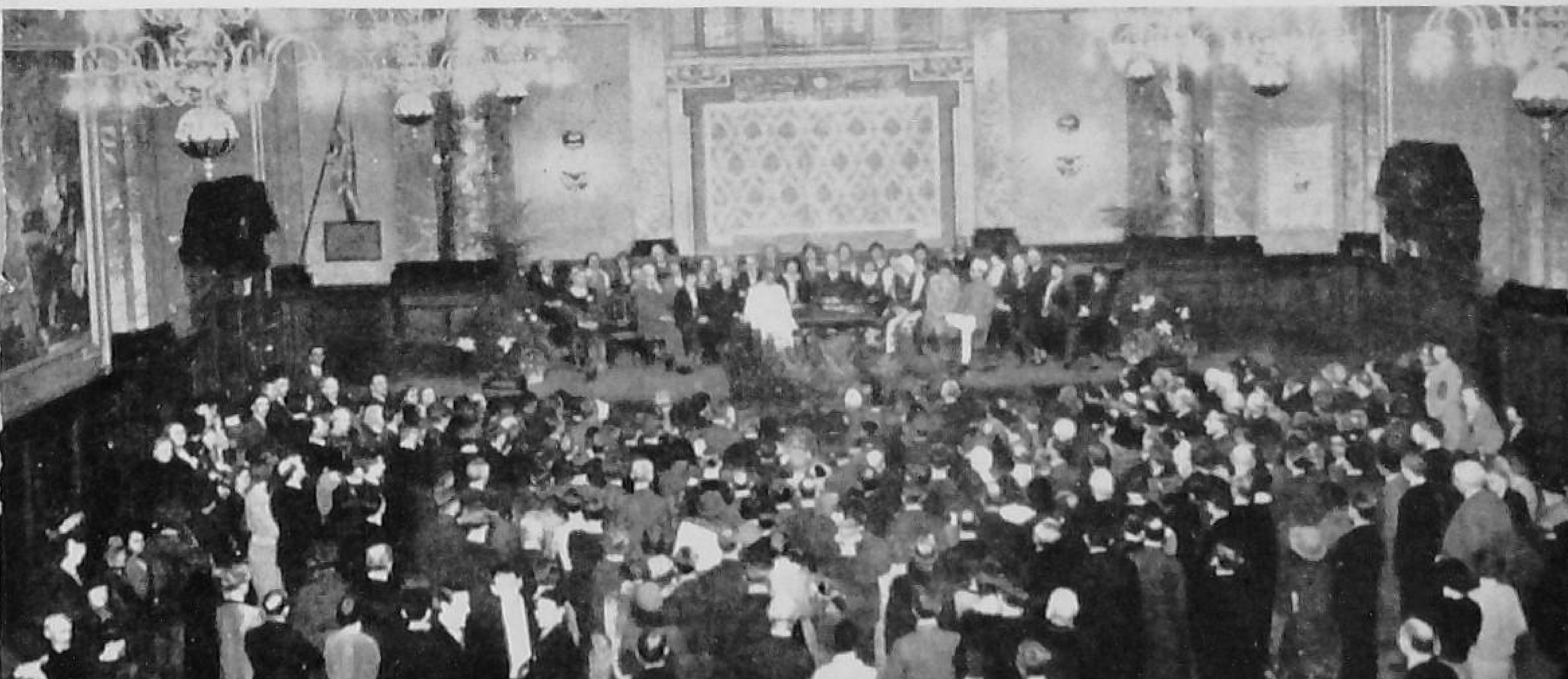
On the way to Buckingham Palace to meet King George V *Courtesy : Associated Press Photo*

American sculptor Jo Davidson at work on a bust of Gandhi *Courtesy : Kusumbehn Desai*



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

With Charlie Chaplin at Canning Town, September 22, 1931



Gandhi inspecting goats at the Royal Agricultural Hall, Islington, London, October 23 *Courtesy : Associated Press Photo*

Addressing a social meeting of the London Vegetarian Society, November 20, 1931 *Courtesy : The Vegetarian Society, London*

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

A rare studio photograph of Gandhi taken in London at the request of Lord Irwin

it related to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in which case he would ask the Congress to accept MacDonald's award. Some prominent Muslims, among whom were the Aga Khan, Shaukat Ali, Jinnah, Shafi and Iqbal, declared that they would be no party to any document unless it included the signatures of all the minorities.

When MacDonald in his speech of November 13, officially blessed the Minorities Pact and the Depressed Class demand for separate electorates as embodied in it, Gandhi saw the snake in the grass and was determined to set his foot down on it. He declared that the different communities were encouraged to press, with all the vehemence at their command, their own respective views, and he pointed out that this question was not the real fulcrum, but the central fact was constitution-building. He asked whether it was to settle the communal question that the delegates were brought here, 6,000 miles from their homes. He twitted Sir Hubert Carr for his minorities' scheme. "I will not deprive Sir Hubert Carr and his associates of the feeling of satisfaction that evidently actuates them, but in my opinion, what they have done is to sit by the carcass, and they have performed the laudable feat of dissecting that carcass." He then declared that "the Congress will wander, no matter how many years, in the wilderness, rather than lend itself to a proposal under which the hardy tree of freedom and responsible government can never grow."

In conclusion, he said: "I can understand the claims advanced by other minorities, but the claims advanced on behalf of the untouchables is to me the unkindest cut of all. It means perpetual bar sinister. We do not want on our register and on our census untouchables, classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Muslims, so may Europeans. Would untouchables remain in perpetuity? I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived. I will not bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world. Those who speak of political rights of untouchables do not know India and do not know how Indian society is today constructed. Therefore, I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command, that if I was the only person to resist this thing I will resist it with my life."

The plenary session of the conference met on November 28 with Ramsay MacDonald in the chair. After the formal opening by the Premier, Lord Sankey submitted the Federal Structure Committee's

reports dealing with the legislative powers and reserved subjects. The Premier submitted the Minorities' Report simultaneously informing the conference that his offer to give a decision and the conditions attached to it had not been accepted. The general debate then began. Gandhi commenced his speech at midnight and delivered for seventy minutes one of his memorable utterances. "I do not think that anything I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the cabinet," he said. "Probably the decision has already been taken. Matters of liberty of practically a whole continent can hardly be decided by mere argumentation."

"While there is yet a little sand left in the glass," he said, "I want you to understand what this Congress stands for. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise, if I can but fire you with the spirit that is working in the Congress—that India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like; a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty and not the artificial product." He said: "My business is not to throw overboard the slave-holder and tyrant. My philosophy forbids me to do so. A nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, it does not need the poison bowl, it does not need the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own to say 'no' and that nation is today learning to say 'no'. I do not want to break the bond between England and India, but I do want to transform that bond. I want to transform that slavery into complete freedom for my country."

He spoke of the communal problem and how it might be solved if the wedge of foreign rule was withdrawn. He appealed to the princes to accept some fundamental rights to apply to all India. He told the Premier, "I am grieved to have to say that up to now I have not been able to discover a common definition for the terms that we have been exchanging during these weary weeks."

In conclusion, he stated: "This is, perhaps, the last time I shall be sitting with you at negotiations. It is not that I want that. I want to sit at the same table with you, and negotiate and plead with you, and to go down on bended knees before I take the final leap and final plunge. But whether I have the good fortune to continue to tender my co-operation or not does not depend on me. It largely depends on you. But it may not even depend on you. It depends on many circumstances over which neither you

nor we may have any control whatsoever. Then, let me perform this pleasant task of giving my thanks to all, from Their Majesties down to the poorest in the East End, where I have taken up my habitation. No matter what befalls me, no matter what the fortunes may be of this conference, one thing I shall certainly carry with me, that is, from the high to low I have found nothing but the utmost courtesy and utmost affection. I consider that it was well worth my paying this visit to England in order to find this human affection. It has enhanced, it has deepened my irrepressible faith in human nature that although the Englishmen and Englishwomen have been fed upon lies that I see so often disfiguring your press, that although in Lancashire, the Lancashire people had perhaps some reason for becoming irritated against me, I found no irritation and no resentment even in the operatives. The operatives, men and women, hugged me, and they treated me as one of their own. I shall never forget that.

"I am carrying with me thousands upon thousands of English friendships. I do not know them, but I read that affection in their eyes, as early in the morning I walk through your streets. All this hospitality and all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory no matter what befalls my unhappy land. I thank you for your forbearance."

On December 1, Ramsay MacDonald concluded the Round Table Conference with a statement in which he repeated the salient sentences of the previous declaration: "My colleagues in His Majesty's present Government fully accept that statement of January last as representing their own policy. And, in particular, they desire to reaffirm their belief in an all-India federation as offering the only hopeful solution of India's constitutional problem."

In proposing a vote of thanks to the chair, Gandhi did not make any comment on the decisions of the conference but was content to congratulate the Premier on his great perseverance and capacity. He, however, concluded ominously:

"It is somewhat likely—I would say only somewhat likely, because I would like to study your declaration once, twice, thrice, as often as it may be necessary, scanning every word of it, reading its hidden meaning, if there is a hidden meaning in it, crossing all the t's, dotting all the i's, and if I then come to the conclusion as just now seems likely—that, as far as I am concerned we have come to

the parting of the ways. That our ways take different directions does not matter to us. You are entitled to my hearty and most sincere vote of thanks. It is not given to us always to expect meticulous regard for each other's opinions and always to be accommodating so that there is no principle left with you. On the contrary, dignity of human nature requires that we must face the storms of life. I do not know in what direction my path will lie, but it does not matter to me in what direction that path lies. Even then, although I may have to go in opposite direction, you are still entitled to a vote of thanks from me from the bottom of my heart."

The Prime Minister replied: "My dear Mahatma, let us go on with this way of co-operation. It may be the only way. Should we not link our political ideas to the glorious spiritual impulses which lie at the source of all our dealings? One thing I quarrel with Mr. Gandhi about. Why does he refer to himself in relation to me as an old man? Surely, it was a young man who spoke to us in such rousing tones this morning at one. Mr. Gandhi has an advantage over me in youth. I do not know who looks younger, but I think I am much nearer the end of my time than he. I wish you all a very good voyage."

Message To The West

1931

Outside the conference Gandhi preferred to discuss non-political subjects. When the Columbia Gramophone Company requested him to make a record for them, Gandhi pleaded his inability to speak politics, and added that, at the age of sixty, he could make his first and last record which should, if wanted, make his voice heard for all time. Confessing his anxiety to speak on the spiritual matters, he read out his old article on God.

His attendance at the Round Table Conference formed only a small part of his activities. A good part of his time was devoted to unofficial meetings, and discussions with distinguished British personalities, prominent among whom were George Bernard Shaw, Dr. Howlett Johnson, C. P. Scott, Evelyn Wrench, Lloyd George, Gilbert Murray, Prof. Laski, Dr. Lindsay, Edward Thompson and many others. Lord Irwin and Col. Maddock welcomed him most cordially. Madame Montessori met him to discuss child education. The most numerous among the foreign callers had been Americans, who pressed for his visit to their country. Roger Baldwin and Rev. John Haynes Holmes, however, counselled him against it, feeling certain that his mission would be subordinated to American preoccupation with his dress and diet. When Charlie Chaplin asked for an interview, Gandhi was on the point of refusing it, but when they met, their friendship was sealed. Gandhi earned goodwill for India from everyone he met. "He has been able to command himself, and the cause of his country," observed Prof. Ernest Barker of Cambridge, "as something far beyond the stature of a political agitator or a matter of mere political agitation. He has caught the attention and focussed the interest of the western people at large." Prof. Edward Thompson of Oxford wrote: "The conviction came to me, that not since Socrates has the world seen Gandhi's equal for absolute self-control and composure." Asked about his impression

of Gandhi, Shaw replied: "Impression of Gandhi! You might as well ask one to give his impression of the Himalayas."

An American journalist had a very interesting discussion on mass production with Gandhi. About a year prior to the meeting, the journalist had met Henry Ford and in the course of conversation had mentioned to him his view, that the current European conditions were opposed to the continuance of mass production. Ford had replied that those conditions were to pass away in a short time and a demand for cheaper things would spring up. "It is a question of raising the standard of living of the people," observed Ford. "Do you feel, Mr. Gandhi," the journalist asked, "that mass production will raise the standard of living of the people?"

"I do not believe in it," he said, "there is tremendous fallacy behind Mr. Ford's reasoning. Without simultaneous distribution on an equally mass scale, the production can result only in a great world tragedy. Take Ford's cars. The saturation point is bound to be reached soon or late. Beyond that point, the production of the cars cannot be pushed. What will happen then? Mass production takes no note of the real requirement of the consumer. If mass production were in itself a virtue, it should then be capable of indefinite multiplication. But it can be shown that mass production carries with it its own limitations. If all countries adopted the system of mass production, there would not be a big enough market for their products. Mass production must then come to a stop."

"I wonder," proceeded the journalist, "whether you feel that this saturation point has already arrived in the western world. Ford says that there never can be too many articles of quality, that the needs of the world are constantly increasing and that while there might be saturation in the market for a particular commodity, the general saturation would never be reached."

"Without entering upon an elaborate argument," said Gandhi, "I would categorically state my conviction that the mania of this mass production is responsible for the world crisis. Granting for the moment that machinery may supply all the needs of humanity, still, it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go in a round-about way to regulate distribution, whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated, and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation."

The American journalist mentioned Ford's favourite plan of decentralization of industry by the use of electric power conveyed on the wires to the remotest corner, instead of coal and steam, as a possible remedy, and drew up the picture of hundreds and thousands of small, neat, smokeless villages, dotted with factories, run by village communities. "Assuming all that to be possible," he asked, "how far will it meet your objection?" "My objection will not be met by that," replied Gandhi, "because, while it is true that you will be producing things in innumerable areas, the power will come from one selected centre. That, in the end, I think, would be found to be disastrous. It would place such a limitless power in one human agency that I dread to think of it. The consequence, for instance, of such a control of power would be that I would be dependent on that power for light, water, even air, and so on. That, I think, would be terrible."

"Mr. Gandhi," the journalist continued, "this is particularly appropriate moment, it seems to me, for you to be visiting London, because, apart from the political questions, it seems to be a time when the western world is disillusioned in regard to machinery in general, in regard to the mass production system we have built up in Germany and America in particular, and people are feeling somewhat bewildered and doubtful as to their value and asking themselves whether we have not, after all, overdone it. Have you any idea as to what Europe and America should do to solve the problem presented by too much machinery?"

"You see," remarked Gandhi, "that these nations are able to exploit the so-called weaker or the unorganized races of the world. Once these races gain this elementary knowledge and decide that they are no more going to be exploited, then they will be satisfied with what they can provide themselves. Mass production, then, at least where the vital necessities are concerned, will disappear."

"As a world organization?"

"Yes."

"But even these races will then require more and more goods as their needs multiply."

"They will then produce for themselves. And when that happens, mass production, in the technical sense in which it is understood in the West, ceases."

"You mean to say it becomes local."

"When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. The endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents would then come to an end. Take a concrete instance. England today is the cloth shop of the world. It needs to hold world in bondage to secure its market. But under the change I have envisaged, she would limit her production to the actual needs of her forty-five millions of population. When that need is satisfied, the production would necessarily stop. It won't be continued for the sake of bringing in more gold, irrespective of the needs of a people and at the risk of their impoverishment. There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of the few, as is happening in America. America is today able to hold the world in fee by selling all kinds of trinklets, or by selling her unrivalled skill, which she has a right to do. She had reached the acme of mass production, and yet she has not been able to abolish unemployment or want. There are still thousands, perhaps, millions of people in America who live in misery, in spite of the phenomenal riches of the few. The whole of the American nation is not benefited by this mass production."

"The fault lies in distribution," said the journalist. "It means that, whilst our system of production has reached a high pitch of perfection, the distribution is still very defective. If distribution could be equalized, would not mass production be sterilized of all its evils?"

"No," said Gandhi, "the evil is inherent in the system. Distribution can be equalized when production is localized, in other words, when the distribution is simultaneous with production. Distribution will never be equal so long as you want to tap other markets of the world to dispose of your goods. That does not mean that the world has no use for the marvellous advances in science and organization that the western nations have made. It only means that the western nations have to use their skill. If they want to use their skill abroad from philanthropic motives, America would say, 'Well, we know how to make bridges, we won't keep it a secret, but we say to the whole world, we will teach you how to make bridges and we will charge you nothing.' America says, 'Where other nations can grow one blade of wheat, we can grow two thousand.' Then, America should teach that art free of charge to those who will learn it, but

Courtesy: Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

A sketch of Gandhi in his Knightsbridge office, London, 1931

Poy in the Evening News] [London

"WE THREE"

Poy's portrait of Mr. Gandhi and companions

Mr. Gandhi And The Goats.

Don't disappoint your goats,
Gandhiji;
Don't disappoint your goats.
They are longing to see
Old England,
And have booked by the train
and boats.
So do not be unkind, Gandhiji;
Don't put a sob in their throats.
If You have to stay behind,
Gandhiji,
Do let us welcome the Goats.

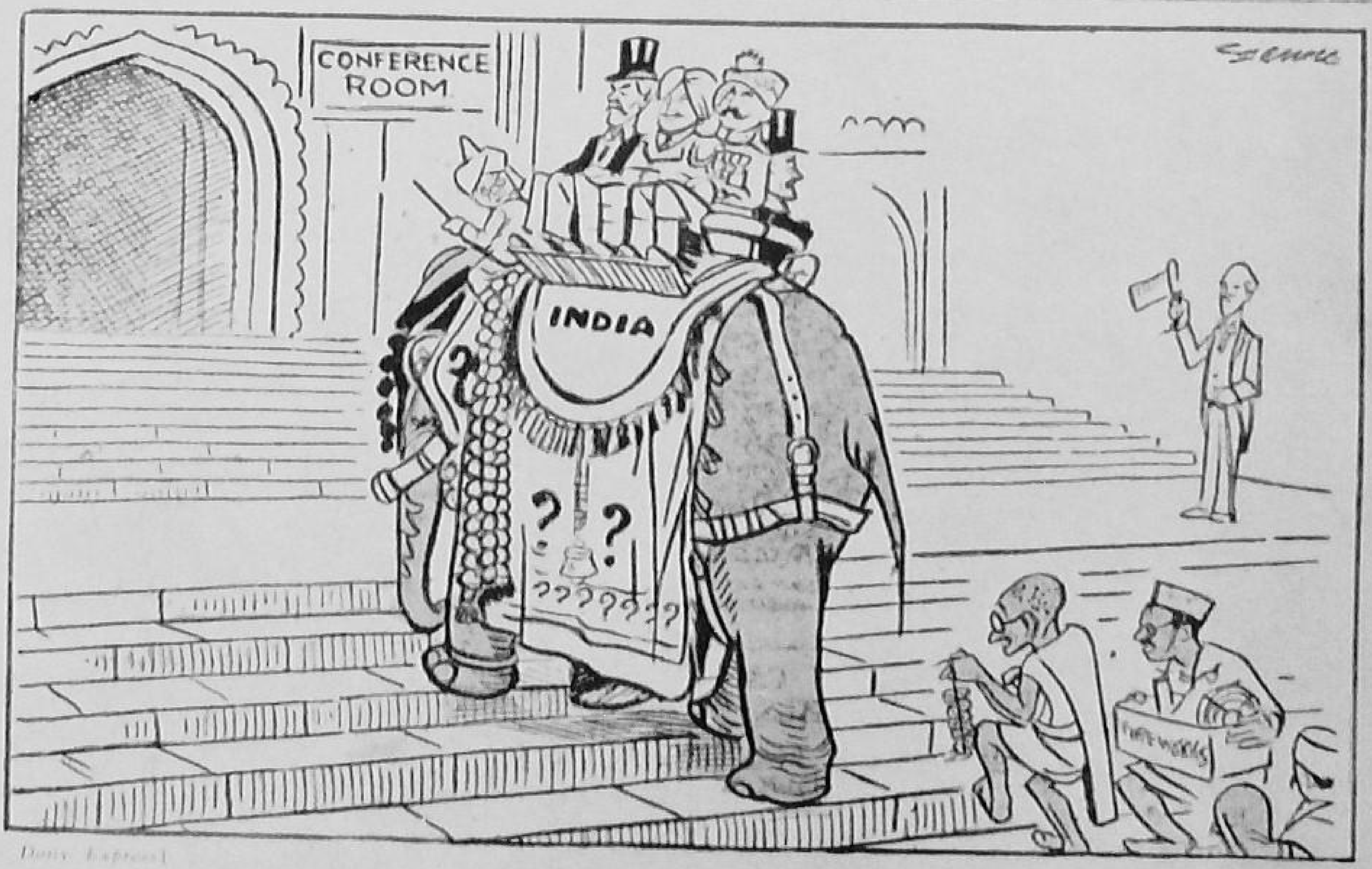
" Daily Mail ".

Gandhi's cartoons published in the foreign press during R.T.C., 1931

GANDHI

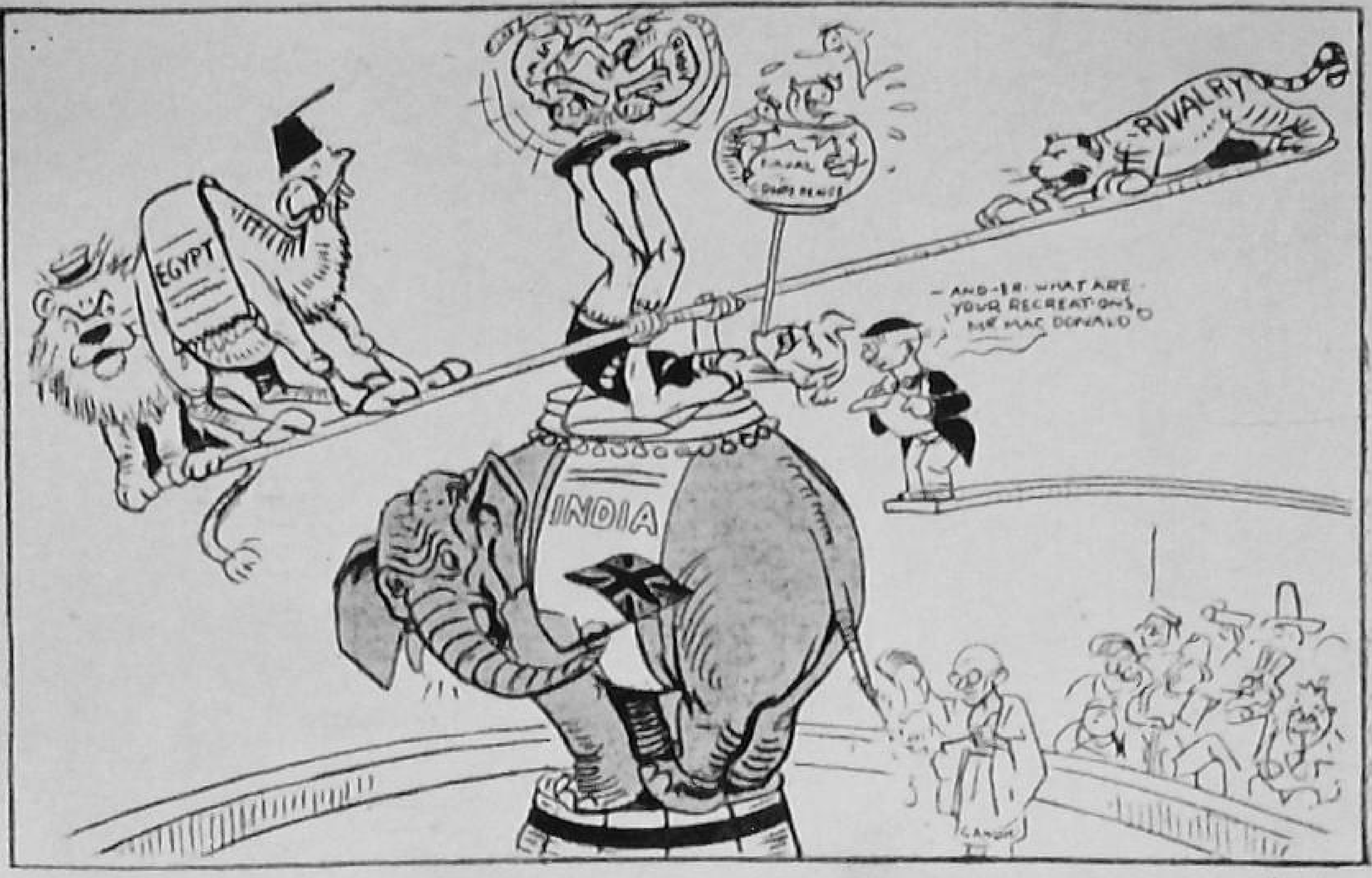
Life] [New York

Low in the "Evening Standard" "SEE BRITAIN FIRST" [London

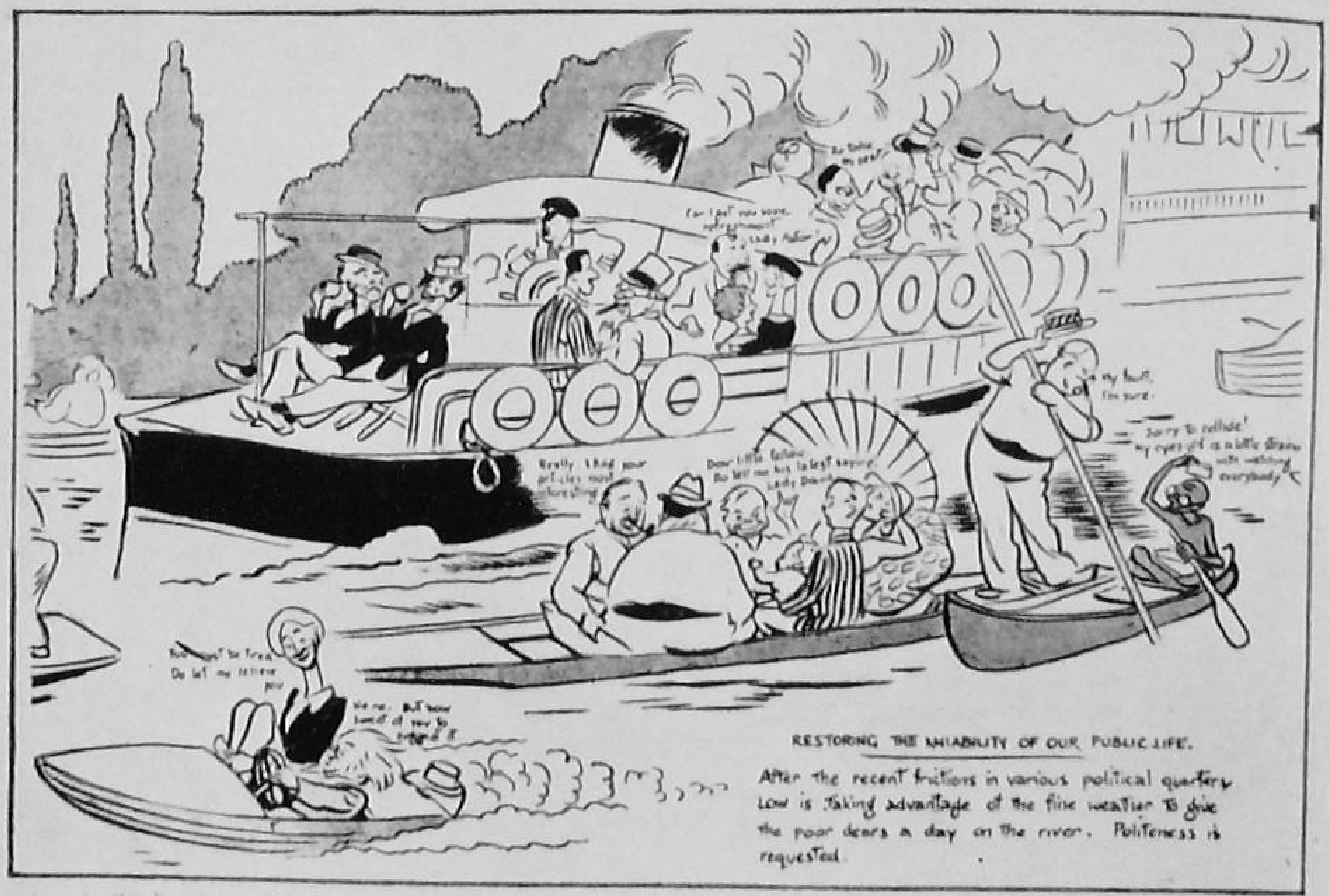


Daily Express] [London

The Little Mahout: "If you fellows behind there will only stop letting off fireworks this elephant will be all right."



Daily Express] TO-DAY'S BREATHLESS INTERVIEW. [London

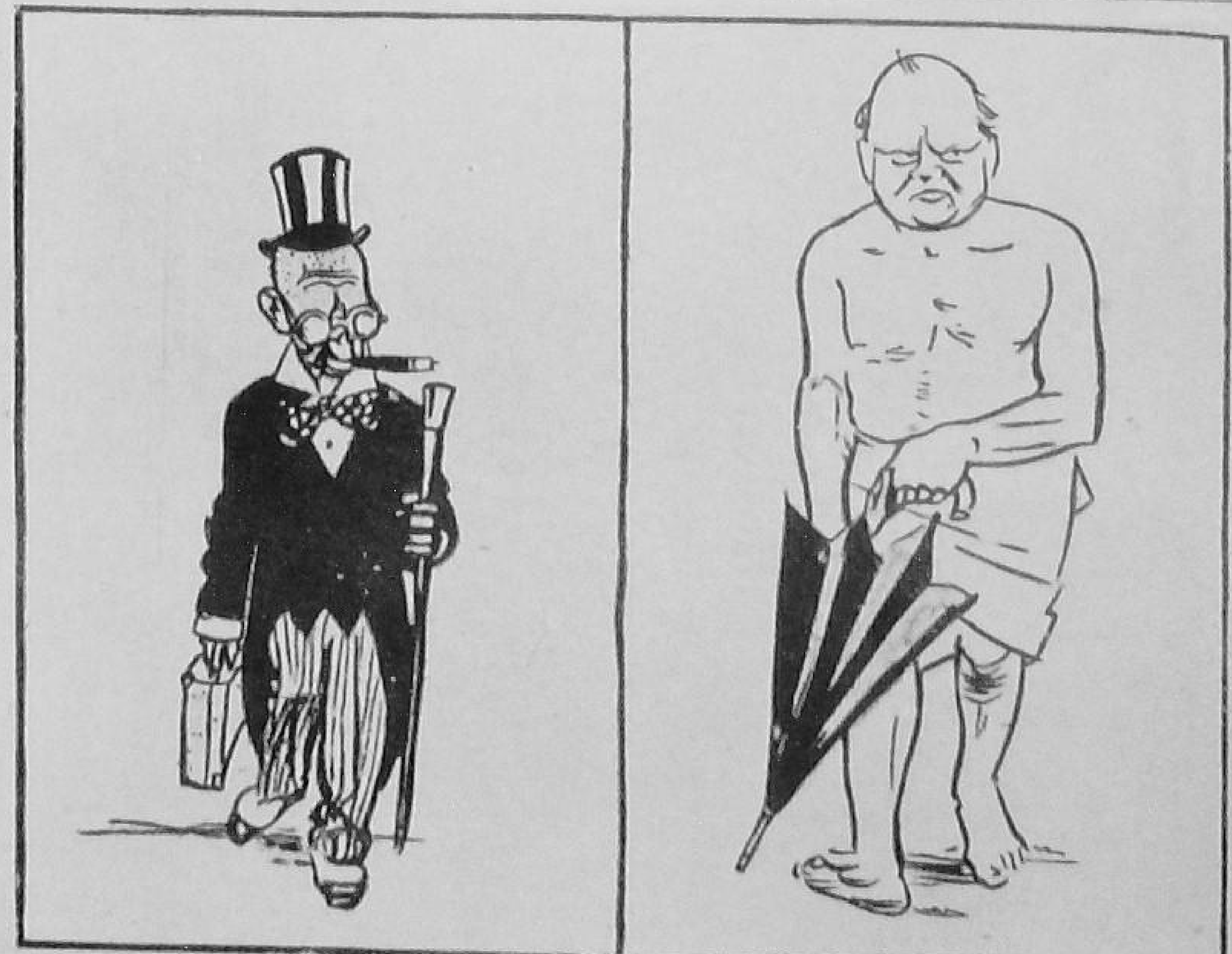


Low in the Evening Standard] A DAY OFF. [London

PASSING SHADOW

Evening Standard Low's cartoon

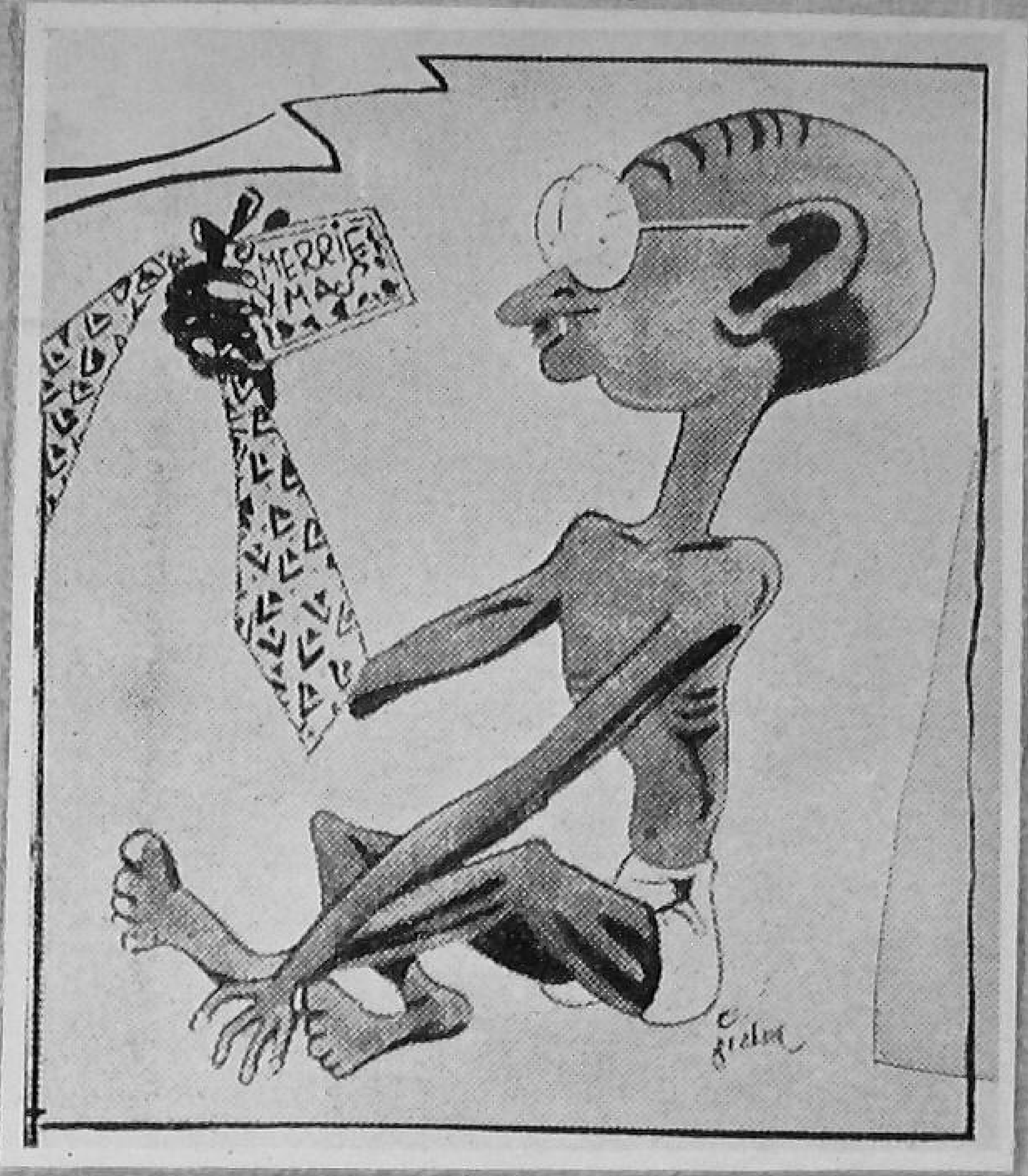
a peal of laughter . . . .



Reynolds in the Morning Post]

RECIPROCAL COURTESIES.
(A suggestion for the Round-Table Conference.)

[London


MERRIE XMAS

Gandhi's Vier Aangezichten.

(Geteekend en toegelicht door MICHAEL LORANT, Londen.)

Heel Londen is in rep en roer over Gandhi. Nog nooit werd een zwijgende figuur zoo druk besproken als hij. Als zwijgen goud is, dan moet hij wel millioenen waard zijn.

Welk innerlijk gaat er toch schuil achter dit merkwaardig uiterlijk?

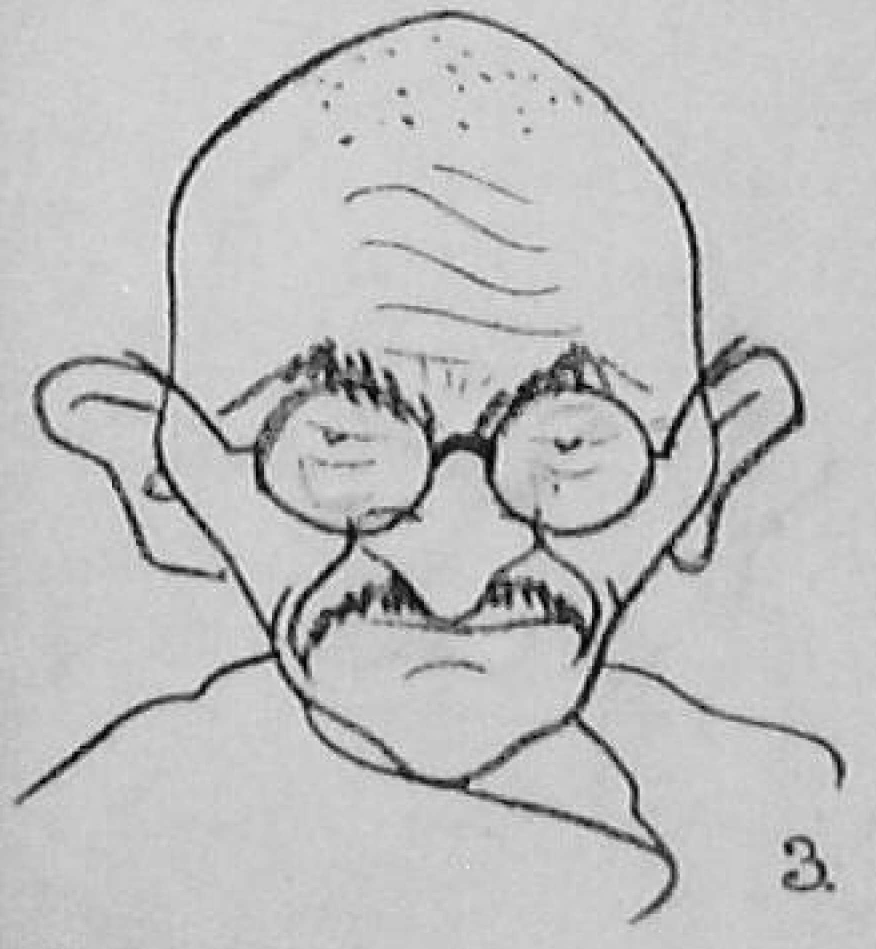
Ik slaagde er in zijn trekken vast te leggen, in vier van zijn stemmingen. Als volgt:

1. Gandhi ziet in de toekomst.

Hij wendt zich van den vrager af; zijn oogen hebben een wezenlooze uitdrukking en zijn gevolg wordt met ontzag vervuld: Ziedaar een Profeet!

2. Gandhi is in gepeins verzonken.

Zijn gemoedsrust is door een onverwachte vraag verstoord. Zijn hoofd valt voorover; hij denkt, hij wikt en weegt! Hij wordt bijna menschelijk.



3. Gandhi piekert.

Een zeer ingewikkelde geestestoestand.

Zijn mond gaat half open om iets te zeggen, maar dan bezint hij zich en drukt hij zijn lippen vastberaden opeen. Langzaam verheft hij het skelet-achtige hoofd en staart naar den rechterhoek van de kamer, alsof hij nooit weer ergens anders heen wilde kijken. Zoekt hij naar woorden? Deze man is de verpersoonlijking van de omzichtigheid.

4. Gandhi lacht.

Is hij niet snoezig? Zijn groote tandelooze mond opent zich als de ingang van een grot, zijn snor hangt af als een druipsteen-formatie en een ijl geluid, een onduidelijk, kinderlijk gelach klinkt als een klokje op. De vraag van den journalist is àl te eenvoudig. De heldere lach gaat over in sisklanken. Nee maar, hij spreekt. Hoera! Nu is de Mahatma op dreef... hij voorspelt, hij profeteer

How America saw Gandhiji's
Passive Resistance.

J. C. Hill in the Star] [Auckland, N.Z.

Schilling in *Simplicissimus*] [Munich

GANDHI IN THE LIONS' DEN

Post-Dispatch] [St. Louis

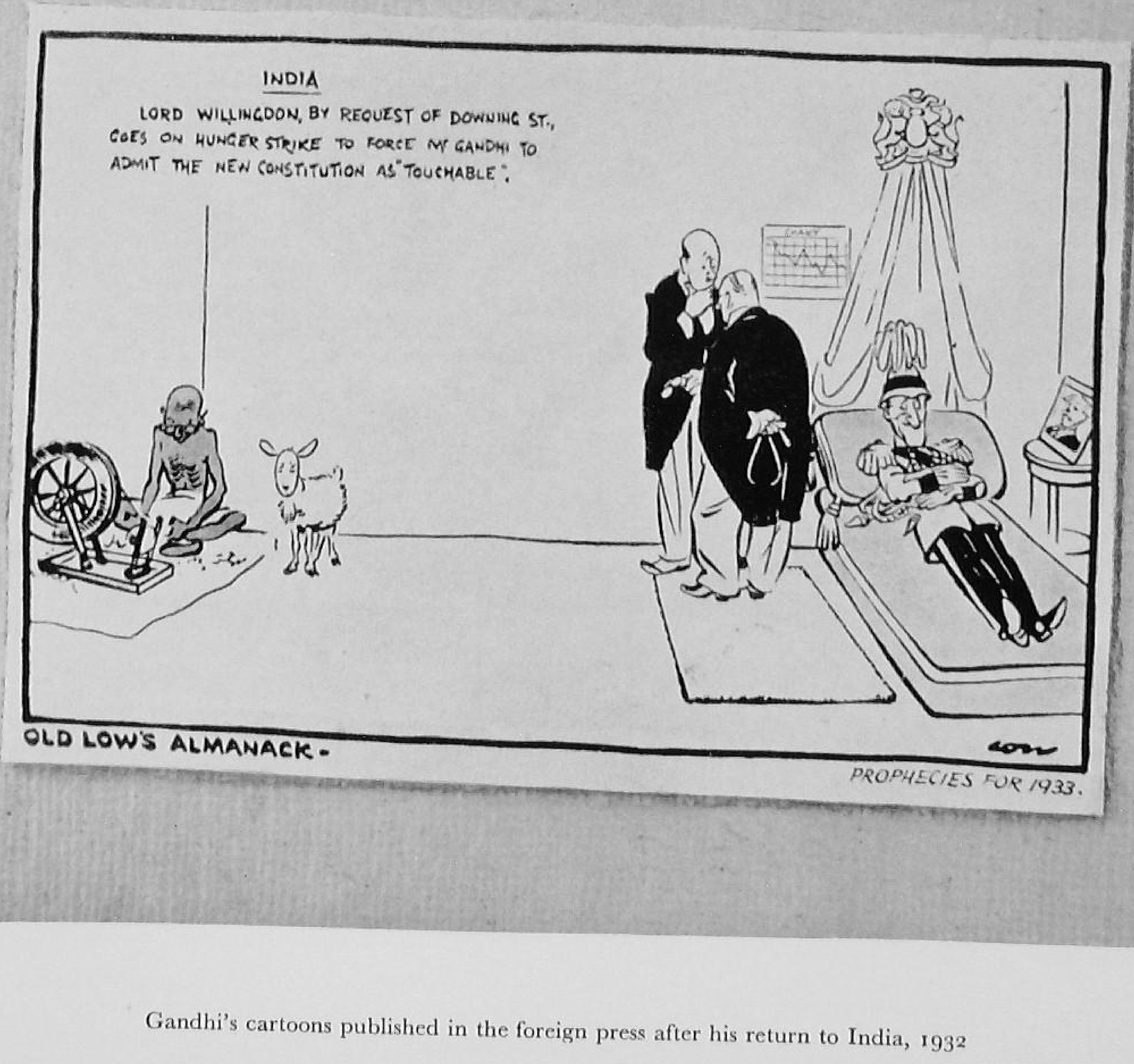
THE GHOST WALKS IN INDIA.

Fitzpatrick in the Post-Dispatch] [St. Louis

A ghost goes home

Kladderadatsch] [Berlin

Gandhi



Gandhi's cartoons published in the foreign press after his return to India, 1932

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

A sketch of Gandhi, London

not aspire to grow wheat for the whole world, which would spell a sorry day for the world indeed."

He next asked Gandhi, referring to Russia, whether it was not a country that had developed mass production without exploiting the less industrialized nations, or without falling into the pit of unequal distribution.

"In other words," remarked Gandhi, "you want me to express opinion on state-controlled industry, that is, an economic order in which the production and distribution are controlled and regulated by the state as is being done in Russia. Well, it is a new experiment. How far will it ultimately succeed, I do not know. If it were not based on force, I would dote on it. But today, since it is based on force, I do not know how far and where it will take us."

"Then, you do not envisage mass production as an ideal future of India," said the journalist.

"Oh yes, mass production, certainly," observed Gandhi, "but not based on force. After all, the message of the spinning wheel is that. It is mass production, but mass production in people's own homes. If you multiply individual production to millions of times, would it not give you mass production on a tremendous scale? But I quite understand that your 'mass production' is a technical term for production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery. I have said to myself that that is quite wrong. My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions. Under my system, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his labour has that coin, has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms—hence it is no robbery. You may object that this is a reversion to the primitive system of barter. But is not all international trade based on the barter system?

"And look, again, at another advantage that this system affords. You can multiply it to any extent. But concentration of production *ad infinitum* can only lead to unemployment. You may say that the workers thrown out of work by the introduction of improved machinery will find occupations in other jobs. But in an organized country where there are fixed and limited avenues of employment

only, where the worker has become highly skilled in the use of one particular kind of machinery, you know from your experience that this is hardly possible. Are there not over three millions unemployed in England today? A question was put to me only the other day: 'What are we going to do with these three millions unemployed?' They cannot shift from factory to field in a day. It is a tremendous problem."

"Some people have the impression," the journalist said, "that you are a sworn enemy of machinery in general."

"That is quite wrong," said Gandhi, "the spinning wheel is also machinery. It is a beautiful work of art. It typifies the use of machinery on a universal scale. It is machinery reduced to the terms of the masses."

"So, you are opposed to machinery, only because and when it concentrates production and distribution in the hands of the few," finally summed up the journalist.

"You are right," said Gandhi. "I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me."

Madame Montessori's reception to Gandhi was significant. "He had been in my thoughts for years and years," she said. "I have followed him with my soul. It seemed to me that this venerable being might greatly aid the teachers whom I am preparing." She welcomed him saying: "The world civilization and thought of the child, this is what links us and brings us together in your presence. For we teach children to live, to live that spiritual life upon which alone can be built up the peace of the world. That is why students are gathered together here to hear the voice of a Master in the art of life and for all of us, students and their friends, this will be a memorable day in our lives." In reply, Gandhi said:

"I was looking forward to meeting the children here and you all. It was a great pleasure to me to see these children. It was a matter of inexpressible joy to me that from their childhood the children were made to understand the virtue of silence, and how in response to the whisper from their teacher the children came forward, one after another, in pin-drop silence. It gave me great pleasure to see those beautiful rhythmic movements and, as I was watching the movements of the children, my whole heart went out to the millions of the children of the semi-starved villages of India, and I asked myself as my heart went out to those children,

'Is it possible for me to give them those lessons and the training that are being given under your system, to those children?' We are conducting an experiment amongst the poorest of the children in India. I do not know how far the experiment will go. We have the problem of giving real vital education to the children of India's hovels, and we have no material means.

"We have to fall back upon the voluntary assistance of teachers, but when I look for teachers, they are very few, especially, teachers of the type wanted, in order to draw the best from the children through understanding, through studying their individuality and then putting the child on its own resources, as it were, on its honour. From my experience of hundreds, I was going to say thousands, of children—I know that they have perhaps a finer sense of honour than you and I have. The greatest lessons in life—if we would but stoop and humble ourselves—we would learn, not from grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children.

"I have given you what is, at the present moment, agitating me, namely, the delicate problem considered in human terms of drawing out the best from these millions of children. But I have learnt this one lesson, that what is impossible with man is child's play with God, and if we have faith in that divinity which presides on the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible and in that final hope, I live and pass my time and endeavour to obey His will. Therefore, I repeat that even as you, out of your love for children, are endeavouring to teach those children through your numerous institutions, the best that can be brought out of them, even so, I hope that it will be possible not only for the children of the wealthy and the well-to-do, but for the children of the paupers to receive training of this nature. You have very truly remarked that if we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children, and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have the struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering."

The short intervals, in the midst of his conference duties, were devoted to visiting the places of interest in England, in company of

C. F. Andrews. At Oxford he spent the week-end as the guest of Dr. Lindsay, Master of Balliol. There were several meetings and conferences. Prof. Edward Thompson, Dr. Gilbert Murray, Dr. Gilbert Slater, Prof. Coupland were among those who availed themselves of the opportunity to discuss various subjects with Gandhi. A warm welcome was given to him at Cambridge by Dr. Lowes Dickinson, Prof. Ellis Barker and several other scholars.

He visited Eton, a stronghold of conservatism. "Mr. Shaukat Ali gave us the Muslim case," said the chairman. "Will you give us the Hindu case?" Addressing the boys, Gandhi said:

"You occupy an important place in England. Some of you will become Prime Ministers and generals and administrators in future years. I am anxious to enter your hearts whilst your character is still being moulded and whilst it is still easy to enter. I would like to place before you certain facts as opposed to the false history traditionally imparted to you. Among high officials I find ignorance, not absence of knowledge, but knowledge based on false data; I want you to have true data before you. I think of you, not as empire-builders, but as the members of a nation which will one day have ceased exploiting other nations, and will perhaps have become the guardian of the peace of the world, not by force of arms but by its moral strength. Well, then, I tell you that there is no such thing as a Hindu case, at least, so far as I am concerned; in the matter of my country's freedom I am no more Hindu than you are.

"There is a Hindu case put up by the Hindu Mahasabha representatives, who claim to represent the Hindu mind, but who, in my opinion, do not do so. They will have a national solution of the question, not because they are nationalists but because it suits them. I call that destructive tactics and am pleading with them that, representing as they do the majority, they must step out and give to the smaller communities what they want; then the atmosphere would clear as if by magic. What the vast mass of Hindus feel and want nobody knows, but claiming as I do to have moved among them all these years, I think they do not care for all these pettifogging things; they are not troubled by the question of loaves and fishes in the shape of the electoral seats and administrative posts. The bugbear of communalism is confined largely to the cities, which are not real India, but which are the blotting-sheets of London and other western cities, which consciously or unconsciously prey upon

villages and share with you in exploiting them, by becoming the commission agents of England. This communal question is of no importance compared with the question of Indian freedom of which the British ministers are studiously fighting shy. They forget that they cannot go on for long with a discontented rebellious India—true, ours is non-violent rebellion, but it is rebellion none the less.

"The freedom of India is a bigger thing than the disease, which for the time being is corroding some portions of the community. The moment the alien wedge is removed, the divided communities are bound to unite. There is, therefore, no Hindu case, or if there is one, it must go by the board. If you study this question, it will profit you nothing, and when you go into its exasperating details you will be tempted, very likely, to prefer to see us drowned in the Thames. I am telling you God's truth, when I say that communal question does not matter and should not worry you. But, if you will study history, study the bigger questions, 'How did millions of people make up their minds to adopt non-violence and how did they adhere to it?' Study not the man in his animal nature, man following the laws of the jungle, but study man in all his glory; those engaged in communal squabbles are like specimens in a lunatic asylum; but study men laying down their lives without hurting anyone else in the cause of their country's freedom. Study men following the law of their higher nature, the law of love, so that when you grow to manhood you will have improved your heritage. It can be no pride to you that your nation is ruling over ours. For, no one chains a slave without chaining himself. No nation keeps another in subjection without herself turning into a subject nation.

"It is a most sinful connection, a most unnatural connection, that is existing at present between England and India. Are we not entitled to our freedom? It is our birthright. We are doubly entitled to it, by virtue of the penance and suffering we have undergone. I want you when you grow up to make a unique contribution to the glory of your nation, by emancipating it from its sin of exploitation. Thus you will contribute to the progress of the mankind."

On the eve of his departure from London, General Smuts gave an interview to the press: "I am convinced that Mr. Gandhi is sincerely anxious to come to a fair settlement, and his power, while it lasts, is an enormous asset to Britain in its efforts to arrive at a settlement. He speaks for a large part of India and can deliver

the goods as no other Indian leader can. Every effort should now be made to prevent further misunderstanding and the recrudescence of disorder in India with all the misery it might lead to." The British newspapers killed this interview.

On December 5, 1931 Gandhi left London for Folkestone. As he got into the train at Victoria, he turned anxiously to Miss Muriel Lester and asked: "Are the toys all right?" He was thinking of the little woolly animals, coloured candles and chalk drawings the nursery school children in Bow had given him on his birthday. "They are the only things I am taking back to India," he said, "except what I came with." He went to the window of his third-class carriage to bid adieu to the crowd singing "Auld Lang Syne" as the train moved out.

He was to meet his ship at Brindisi in ten days. The efficient detective took on all the responsibilities—tickets, passports, luggage, everything. There were meetings in Paris where he sojourned for a day. Five days he reserved for Switzerland, where he was to stay as a guest of Romain Rolland.

On a very cold evening of December 5, he arrived at Villeneuve. The two men, Gandhi sixty-two, Rolland sixty-five, met like two friends. Ever since 1923, when *Mahatma Gandhi* was published, they had been correspondents and had longed to see each other. And twice a European visit was projected and cancelled. When they now met at last, it was literally a case of "thought leaping out to wed with the thought."

The next day Rolland, an invalid, received his guest upstairs in his bed-room. That part of the wall space of the little sunlit room which was not hidden by books, showed studies of the heads of those Rolland loved to honour—Goethe, Beethoven, Tolstoy, Gorky, Tagore, Einstein, Lenin and Gandhi. One could feel the agony of his soul as Rolland described the blighting effects of exploitation. Workmen, he said, were the only party in the world in whose case interest and right went together and unless they were saved everything would perish. Soviet Union must be saved at any price, for he had seen such great hope there, and he said it was his great regret that Gandhi never met Lenin—"Lenin who like you never compromised with truth." European problem baffled him. "How I wish I was twenty years younger, so that I might have carried on a fierce battle against the disruptive forces," he said. And as

he drew near Gandhi, he clasped his hands and held them tight for a while, fixing the gaze of his piercing blue eyes on Gandhi. "We never knew," said his sister who was interpreting Rolland, "that this time could come, and sometimes we even feared that we should pass away without ever seeing you."

That day was Monday, Gandhi's day of silence. Rolland spoke for ninety minutes on the tragic, moral and social, state of Europe. Gandhi listened and pencilled questions. This was the first meeting and since then each day they met and exchanged ideas.

On Tuesday they discussed Gandhi's trip to Rome. He wanted to see Mussolini and the Pope. Rolland warned that the fascist regime would exploit his presence for its sinister purpose. Gandhi said that he would break through the cordon, they might throw around him. Rolland suggested that he put certain conditions. He said that it was against his convictions to make such arrangements in advance. Rolland persisted. Gandhi said, "Then tell me, what is your final opinion on my plan to stop in Rome?" Rolland asked him to stay with some independent persons. Gandhi agreed.

Rolland asked Gandhi to comment on his remarks about Europe. Gandhi shared Rolland's agony but said that he had learnt very little from history. "My method is empiric," he explained. "All my conclusions are based on personal experience." This, he admitted could be dangerous and misleading, but he had to have faith in his own views. His trust was in non-violence. It could save Europe. In England, friends tried to show him the weaknesses of his non-violent method; "but even though the whole world doubts it, I will continue to believe in it."

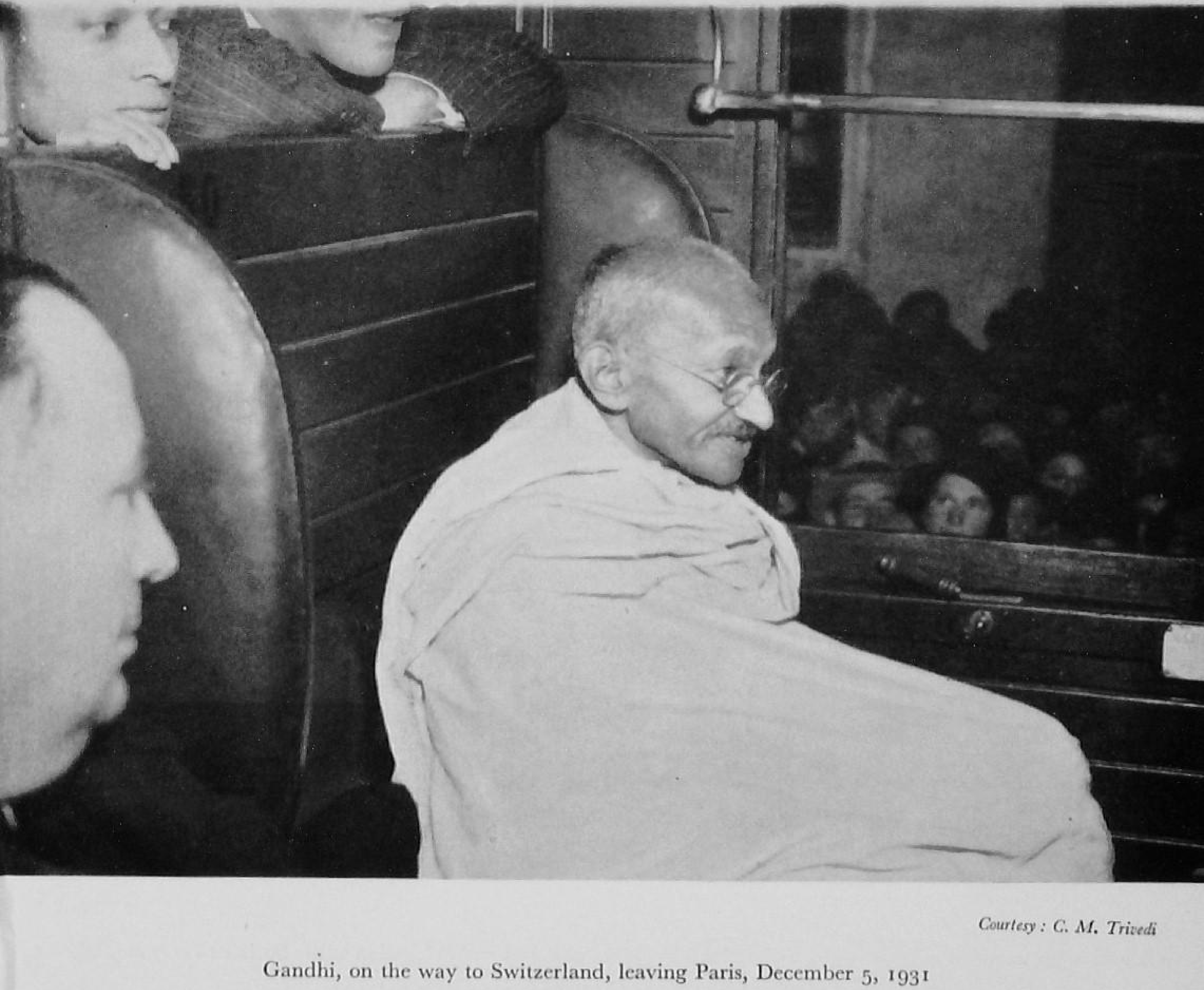
The next two days, keeping Villeneuve as his headquarters, he made short excursions to Lausanne and Geneva, and visited some villages. The village children kept serenading whenever they got the chance and a fiddler used to stand half-way up the stairs of the villa and play while Gandhi took his breakfast. One day as he was going to Geneva, a simple peasant woman gave Gandhi a five-franc piece with the inscription: "A little gift for one of your very poor Indian women from a Swiss working woman." At Lausanne a public meeting was held in a church to welcome him. "Mahatma Gandhi," the chairman began, "how happy we are to have you in our town. We in Europe are afraid, afraid of the unknown, afraid of poverty, afraid of prison and suffering. But you love these things.

You take them gladly. You are not afraid. We know the Sermon on the Mount by heart. You know it and live it. We believe in God and in the Prince of Peace, but we feel humble before you."

Gandhi gave here his message in brief. But speaking at the conscientious objectors' meeting, he poured out his heart in reply to the question—"Why do you regard God as Truth?":

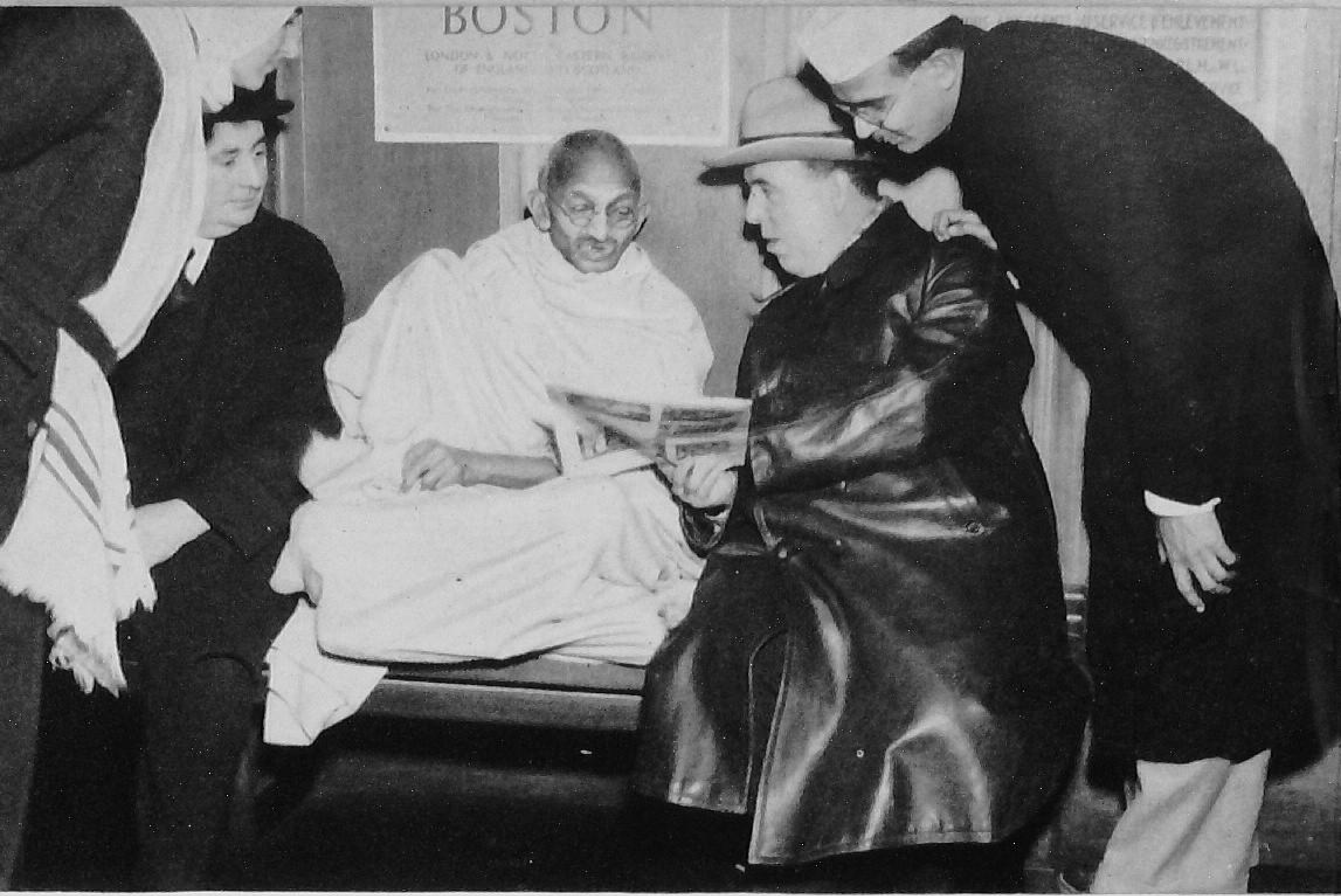
"In my early youth I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as the one thousand names of God. But these one thousand names of God were by no means exhaustive. We believe, and I think it is the truth, that God has as many names as there are creatures. Therefore, we also say that God is nameless, and since God has many forms, we consider Him formless, and since He speaks through many tongues, we consider Him to be speechless and so on. And so, when I came to study Islam, I found Islam too had many names of God.

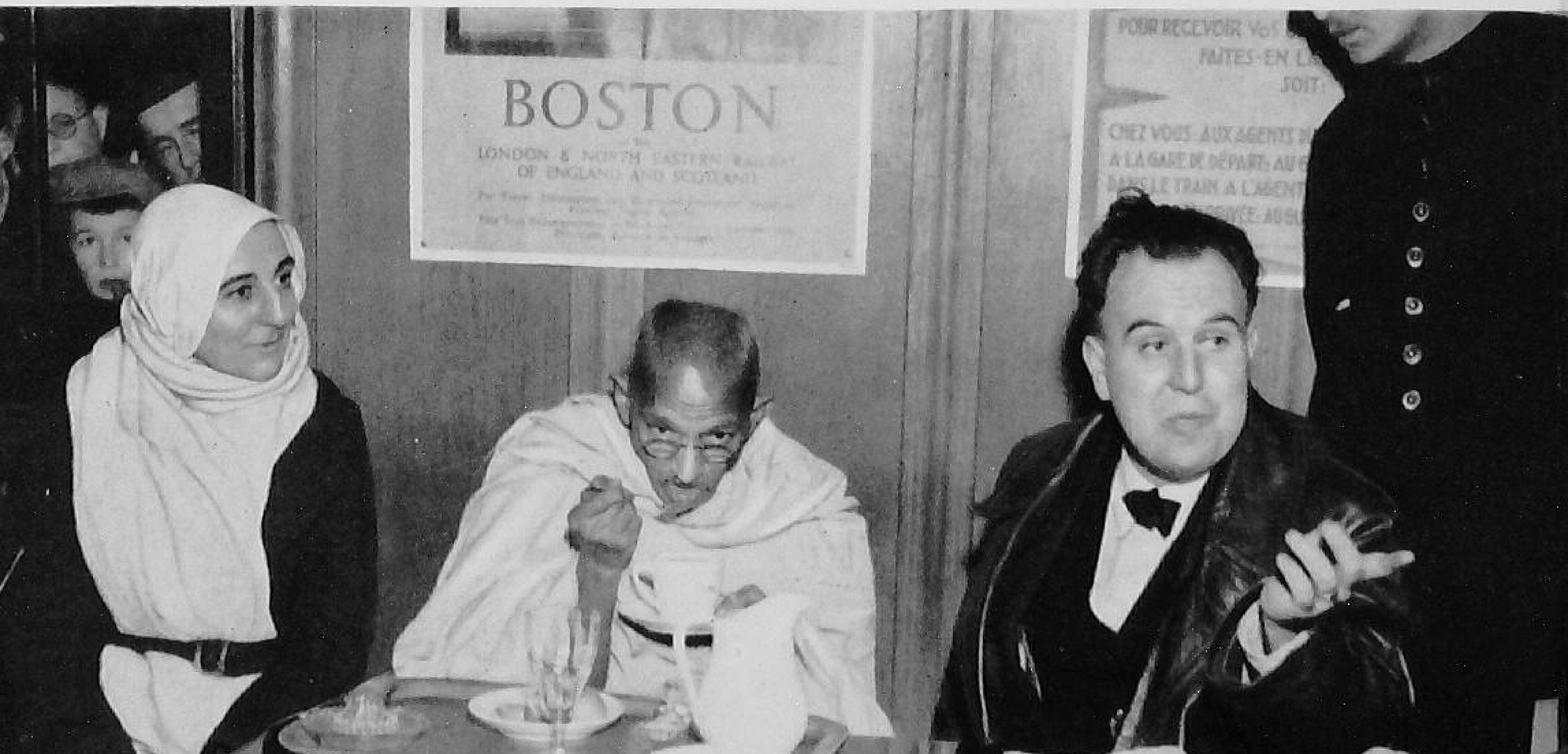
"I would say with those who say 'God is Love', God is Love. But deep down in me I used to say that though God may be Love, God is Truth, above all. If it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, I have come to the conclusion that God is Truth. Two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, 'God is Truth' and 'Truth is God'. I came to that conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after truth which began fifty years ago. I then found that the nearest approach to truth was through love. But I also found that love has many meanings in the English language, and that human love in the sense of passion could become a degrading thing. I found too that love in the sense of ahimsa had only a limited number of votaries in the world. But I never found a double meaning in connection with truth and even atheists had not demurred to the necessity of power of truth. But in their passion for discovering truth, atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God—from their own point of view rightly. It was because of this reasoning that I saw that rather than say that God is Truth, I should say that Truth is God. Add to this the great difficulty, that millions have taken the name of God and in His name committed nameless atrocities. Not that the scientists very often do not commit atrocities in the name of truth. Then there is another thing in Hindu philosophy, namely, God alone is and nothing else exists, and the same truth you see



Courtesy : C. M. Trivedi

Gandhi, on the way to Switzerland, leaving Paris, December 5, 1931
In third-class compartment

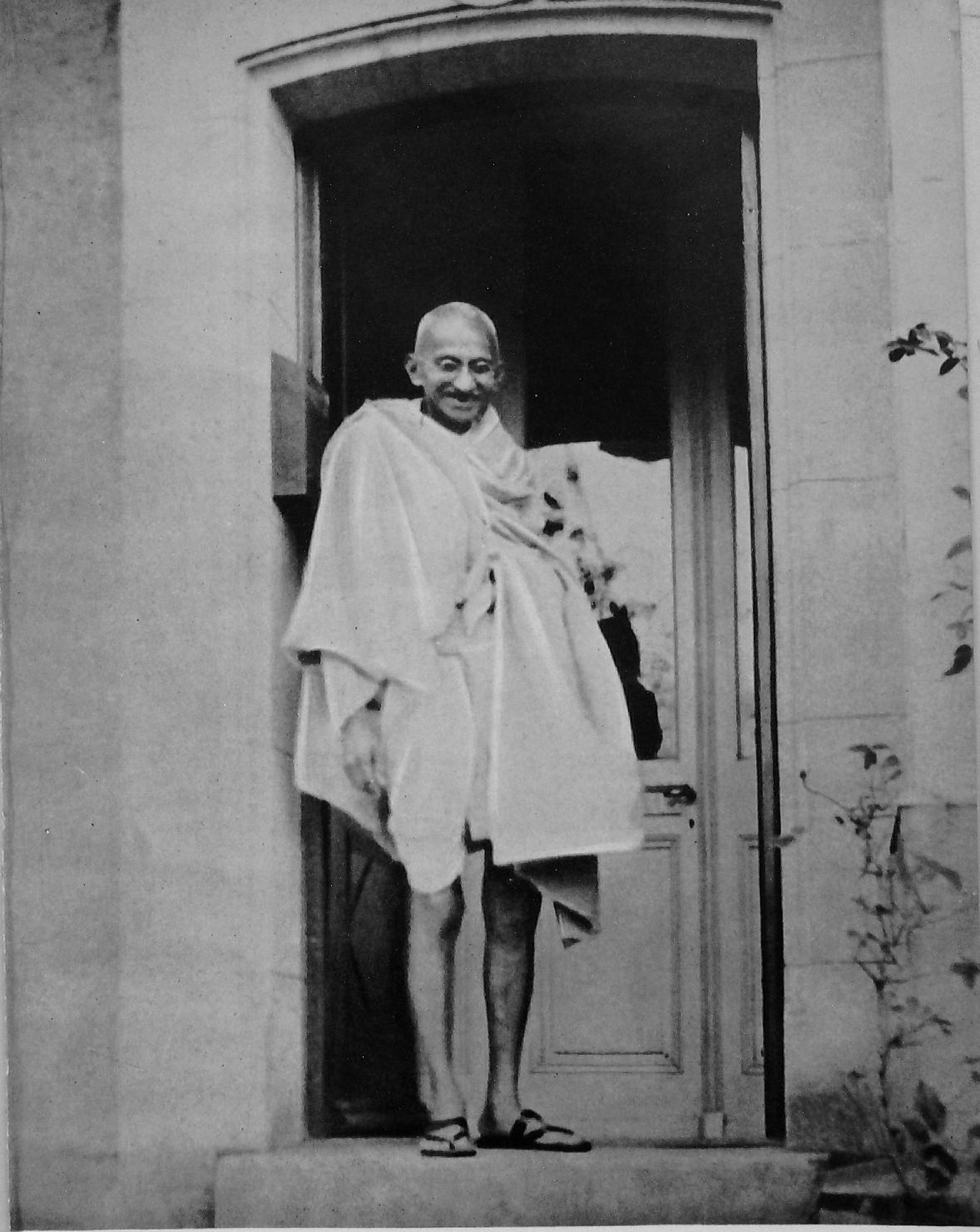




Courtesy : C. M. Trivedi

Gandhi being received on his entry in Switzerland by Edmond Privat and delegation of the Socialist Party at Vallorbe

Having his meals at Customs House, Vallorbe



Courtesy: Manubhai Trivedi

At Rolland's Villa Vionette, Villeneuve, December 6, 1931

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On his early morning walk at Villeneuve

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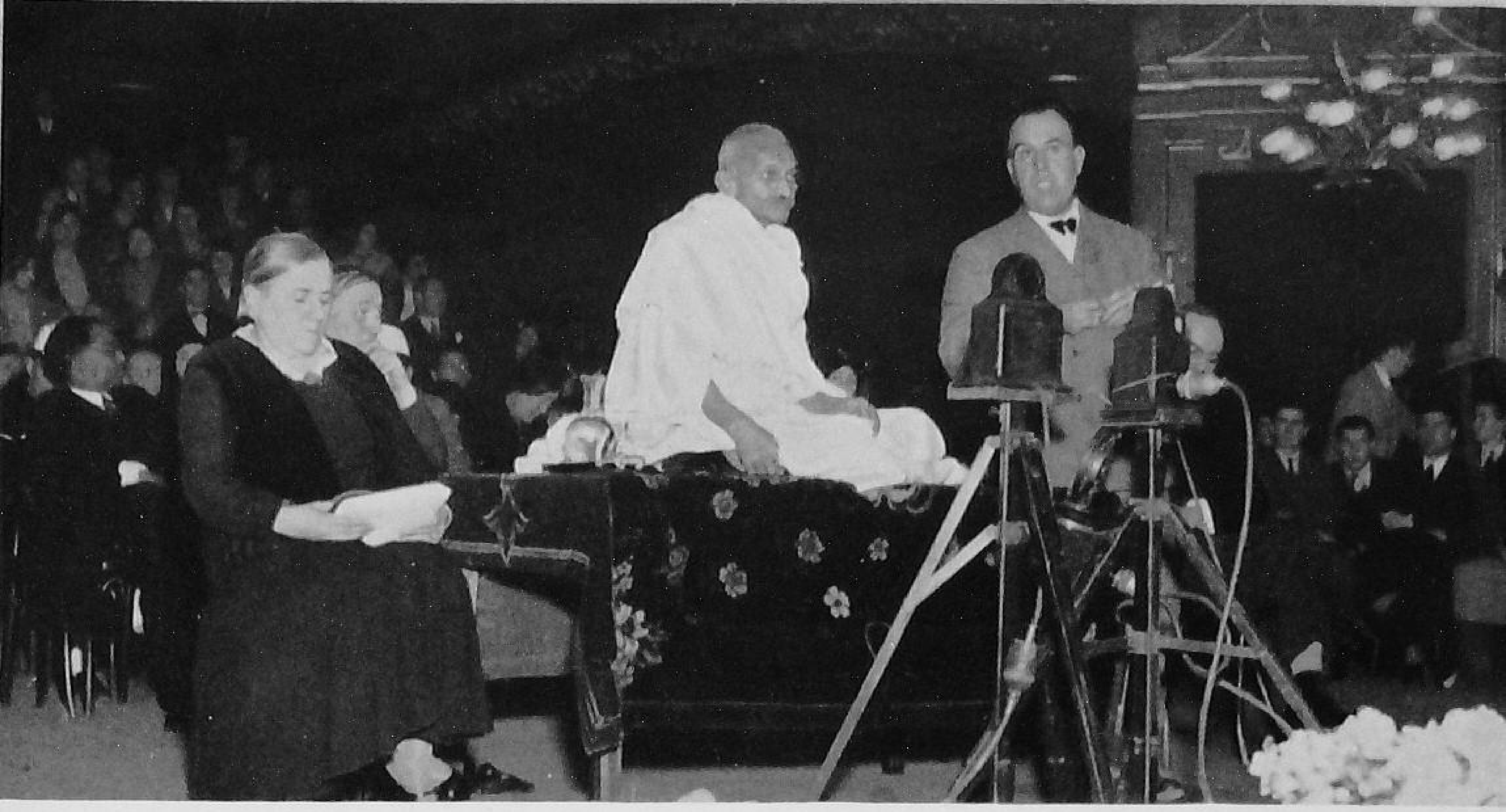
Return to Villa Vionette



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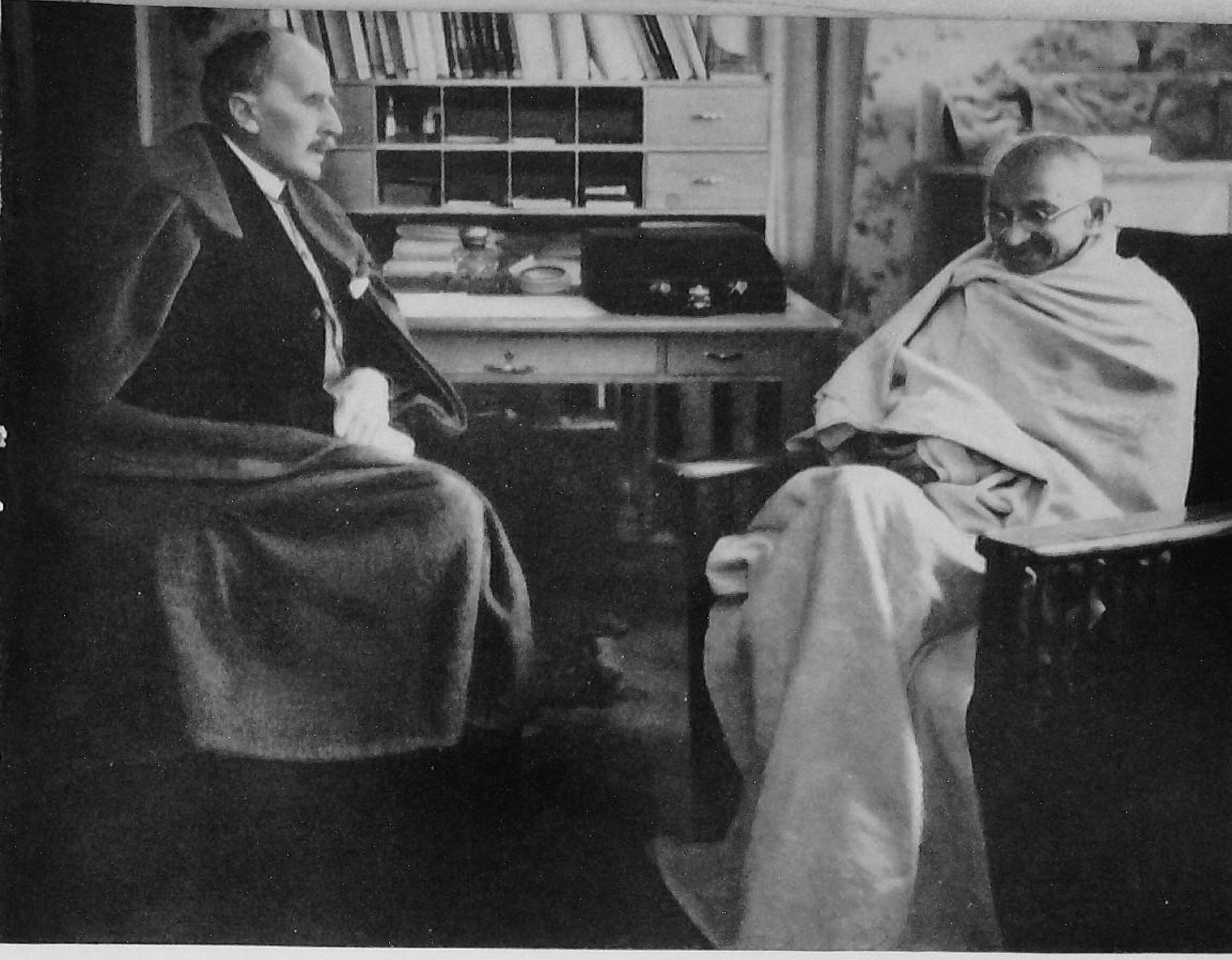
Gandhi addressing a meeting at Lausanne
At press conference, Villeneuve



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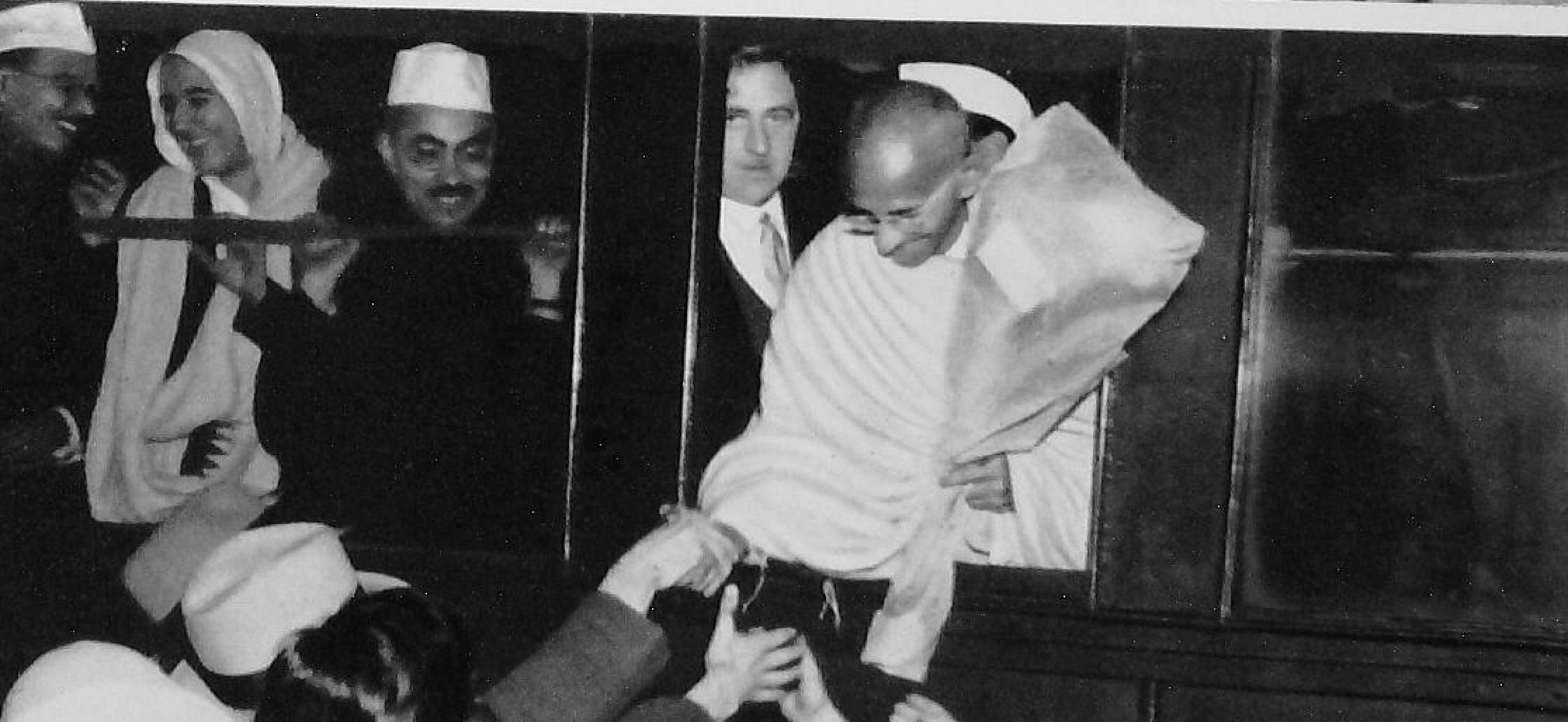
With Rolland at Villa Olga, Villeneuve



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Farewell at Villeneuve, December 11, 1931
Leaving Switzerland for Rome

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi amidst Italian Youth, December 12, 1931

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi inspecting the Italian youth rally in Rome

Courtesy : C. M. Trivedi

Gandhi en route to India embarking S.S. *Pilsna* at Brindisi, December 14, 1931

Courtesy: C. M. Trivedi

Gandhi holding the steering-wheel of S.S. *Pilsna,* December 26, 1931

emphasized and exemplified in the *kalma* of Islam. And there you find it clearly stated that God alone is, and nothing else exists. In fact, the Sanskrit word for truth is a word, which literally means that which exists, *sat*. For these and many other reasons, I have come to the conclusion that the definition—Truth is God—gives me the greatest satisfaction. And when you want to find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, that is, non-violence, and since I believe that ultimately the means and ends are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is Love.

"Truth is what the voice within tells you. Those who would make individual search after Truth as God, must go through many vows. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero."

"Tell us what qualities you think a leader for this age would require," a pacifist urged him. "Realization of God every minute of the twenty-four hours," Gandhi replied. "And the way to find Him is non-violence. A leader must have complete mastery over himself. Anger must be banished, and also fear and falsehood. You must lose yourself. You must not please yourself either with food or with sex. And thus purified, you get the power. It is not your own, it is God's."

One of the kindred spirits that Gandhi came across was Pierre Ceresole, the pioneer of International Voluntary Service for Peace. Talks with him inspired Gandhi to unfold his philosophy in memorable utterances. "Truth and non-violence are perhaps the activest forces you have in the world," Gandhi said. "A man who wields sanguinary weapons and is intent upon destroying those whom he considers as his enemies, does at least require some rest and has to lay down his arms, for a while, in every twenty-four hours. He is, therefore, essentially inactive, for a certain part of the day. But not so the votary of truth and non-violence, for the simple reason that they are not external weapons. They reside in the human breast and they are actively working their way, whether you are awake or whether you are asleep, and whether you are walking leisurely or playing an active game. The panoplied warrior of truth and non-violence is ever and incessantly active."

Einstein looked forward to meet him but had to go to America. "We want to know what Mr. Gandhi thinks of Einstein's appeal to people to go to prison, rather than to do their term of military

service," was the question raised at some meetings. "If I may say so about a great man, I would say that Einstein has stolen the method from me," Gandhi replied humorously. "But, if you want me to elaborate the thing, I would say that only to refuse military service is not enough. To refuse to render military service when particular time arrives is to do the thing after all the time for combating the evil is gone. Military service is only a symptom of the disease which is deeper. I suggest to you that those who are not on the register of military service are equally participating in the crime, if they support the state otherwise. He or she who supports the state organized in the military way, whether directly or indirectly, participates in the sin. Each man takes part in the sin by contributing to the maintenance of the state by paying the taxes. I said to myself during the war, that so long as I ate wheat supported by the army, whilst I was doing everything short of being a soldier, it was best for me to enlist in the army and be shot; else I should retire to the mountains and eat food grown by nature. Refusal of military service is more superficial than non-co-operation with the system which supports the state. But then one's opposition becomes so swift and effective that you run the risk of not being marched to jail only, but of being thrown into the streets."

"Then may not one accept non-military services of the state?" asked Pierre Ceresole. Gandhi answered: "You have touched the tenderest spot in human nature. I was faced with the very question as author of non-co-operation movement. I said to myself, there is no state either run by Nero or Mussolini which has no good points about it, but we have to reject the whole, once we decide to non-co-operate with the system. 'There are in our country grand roads, and palatial educational institutions,' said I to myself, 'but they are part of a system which crushes the nation. I should not have anything to do with them. For, they are like the fabled snake with a brilliant jewel on its head but which has fangs full of poison.' So I came to the conclusion that the British rule in India had crushed the spirit of the nation and stunted its growth, and so I decided to deny myself all the privileges—services, courts, titles. The policy would vary with different countries but sacrifice and self-denial are the essential points. What Einstein has said would occur only once a year and only with a very few people. But I suggest it as your first study to non-co-operate with the state."

"Since disarmament chiefly depends on great powers, why then should Switzerland, which is a small and neutral state, be asked to disarm itself?" In reply, Gandhi said: "It is from the neutral ground of your country that I am speaking to all other powers and not only to Switzerland. If you will not carry this message to the other parts of the Europe, I shall be absolved from all blame. And seeing that Switzerland is a neutral territory and non-aggressive nation, there is all the more reason why she should not need an army. Secondly, it is through your hospitality and by reason of your occupying the vantage ground that you have all nationals coming to you. It is possible for you to give a lesson in disarmament and show that you are brave enough to do without an army."

"But, Mr. Gandhi," said Pierre, "I am afraid our people in Europe are not like yours in India. I am afraid they are not ready for such acts as these." There was a pause, and then, Gandhi said: "Are you sure it is the people who are not ready? I must confess, I do not seem to have come across leaders in Europe—not of the sort that the times call for."

On December 10, Rolland resumed his discussion with Gandhi. He recalled his statement at Geneva that "Truth is God." He gave Gandhi a brief sketch of his life, how cramped he felt in the small French town, and how he became a writer and struggled with the problem of truth in art. "If it is correct," he said, "that 'Truth is God', it appears to me that it lacks one important attribute of God: joy. For, and on this I insist, I recognize no God without joy."

Gandhi said that he did not distinguish between art and truth. "I am against the formula, 'Art for art's sake.' For me, all art must be based on truth. I reject beautiful things if, instead of expressing truth, they express untruth. I accept the formula 'Art brings joy and is good', but on the condition I mentioned. To achieve truth in art I do not expect exact reproductions of external things. Only living things bring living joy to the soul and elevate the soul."

Rolland did not differ, but he stressed the pain of searching for truth and for God. He took a book from his shelf and read a few lines from Goethe.

Then they talked about the perils of another war. "If one nation possessed the heroism to submit without answering violence," said Gandhi, "it would be the most effective lesson. But for this, an absolute faith is necessary."

Rolland said, "And nothing should be done by halves, no matter whether it is bad or good."

On the last day, December 11, Rolland requested Gandhi to deal with some questions submitted by Pierre Monatte, the editor of a Paris magazine called *Proletarian Revolution*. In reply to one query, Gandhi answered that if labour was perfectly organized, it could dictate conditions to the employers. "Labour is the only power in the world." But Rolland interposed that the capitalists might divide the workers; there might be scabs; "then the conscious minority of labour must set up a dictatorship and free the mass of labour to unite in its own interest."

"I am absolutely opposed to that," Gandhi affirmed. Rolland dropped the subject and introduced several others: non-violence in relation to criminals, etc., and "What do you call God? Is it a spiritual personality or a force which rules over the world?"

"God," Gandhi observed, "is not a person. God is an eternal principle. That is why I say that Truth is God. Even the atheists do not doubt the necessity of truth."

The last evening, Gandhi asked Rolland to play some Beethoven. Rolland played a transcription for the piano of the slow movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in C minor representing, as he explained, the triumph of the heroic will over the deepest gloom. He also played, as an encore of his own accord, the "Elysian Fields" of Gluck.

Rolland had just recovered from bronchitis, but he insisted on taking Gandhi to the railway station. With deep wrench they parted and Gandhi entrained for Rome.

The train reached Rome on the morning of December 12. The Italian Government wished Gandhi to be their guest. He politely refused, and stayed with General Moris, a friend of Rolland.

The Pope would not see Gandhi but the Vatican galleries were opened for him specially. Their art treasure greatly interested him. He spent two hours in St. Peter's. The Cistine Chapel held him rapt in awe and wonder. Tears sprang to his eyes as he gazed at the figure of Christ. He could not tear himself away. "I enjoyed my visit to art galleries in Rome and took great interest in art," he wrote to a friend. "But what would be the value of an opinion expressed after a visit lasting only two hours? If I could live there for two or three months, I could observe the paintings and statues

every day and make a study of them. I saw the statue of Christ on the Cross. It attracted me most. But I did not think that European art was superior to Indian art. Both these arts have developed on different lines. Indian art is entirely based on the imagination. European art is an imitation of nature. It is, therefore, easier to understand, but turns our attention to the earth; while the Indian art when understood tends to direct our thoughts to Heaven . . . I attach no importance to these views. It may be that my unconscious partiality for India, or perhaps my ignorance, makes me say so. You will see that I enjoy art. But I have given up or have had to give up many such pleasures."

At six in the evening Gandhi, accompanied by Mirabehn and Mahadev, went to see Mussolini. Visitors to the Duce were made to walk the full length of a huge hall upto the table where he sat in stately eminence. But on this occasion, he came down the hall to meet Gandhi. And after ten minutes the Duce accompanied him as far as the door. The official communique said that the interview lasted for twenty minutes. Mussolini asked him whether he expected to win independence for India through non-violence and what he thought of the fascist state which he had built. With disconcerting frankness, Gandhi told Mussolini that he was merely building a house of cards. Gandhi was not at all impressed by the dictator's personality: "His eyes are never still."

On the last day of his stay in Rome, Signora Albertini, Tolstoy's daughter came to see him. "My father thought so much of you," she said. "My father used to say the only people he could not understand were the Tolstoyans. He did not want people to follow him; he wanted them to practise non-violence. It's the only way. Queer that such a practical programme as yours and his should earn for you both the epithets of dreamer, simpleton, fool."

The time had come for Gandhi to leave Europe. One of his last visitors was the youngest daughter of the King of Italy. Princess Maria had brought him a basket of fruit. "They are Indian figs," she said. "I have brought them for your journey to Brindisi." He was delighted and inspected the daintily packed fruit. He thanked her, but added: "They are not figs." The princess assured him that they were "Fichi d'India". "What we call figs are not like this," he argued. "But whether they are figs or not they will taste just as sweet on the journey, whatever their name." He thanked her once

more. "Her Majesty the Queen packed them for you," the lady-in-waiting said. "It was very kind of her," he remarked.

On December 14, as he was about to step aboard S.S. *Pilsna* at Brindisi, he was offered milk from a cup of the fifth century before the Christ era. "Is it goat's milk?" he asked. "It is goat's milk," several voices replied eagerly.

The impression left by Gandhi on the best minds of Europe was given by Rolland in a letter to his American friend:

"How I should have liked to have you here during the visit of the Indians! They stayed five days, from the 5th to 11th December, at the Villa Vionette. The little man, bespectacled and toothless, was wrapped in his white burnouse, but his legs, thin as a heron's stilts, were bare. His shaven head with its few coarse hairs was uncovered and wet with rain. He came to me with a dry laugh, his mouth open like a good dog panting, and flinging an arm round me leaned his cheek against my shoulder. I felt his grizzled head against my cheek. It was, I amuse myself thinking, the kiss of St. Dominic and St. Francis.

"Then came Mira—Miss Slade—proud of figure, with the stately bearing of a Demeter, and finally three Indians, one a young son of Gandhi, Devadas, with a round and happy face. He is gentle, and but little aware of the grandeur of his name. The others were secretaries, disciples, two young men of rare qualities of heart and mind: Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal.

"As I had contrived shortly beforehand to get a severe cold on my chest, it was to my house and to the chamber on the second floor, where I sleep at Villa Olga, that Gandhi came each morning for long conversations. My sister interpreted, with the assistance of Mira, and I had a Russian friend and secretary, Miss Kondacheff, who took notes on our discussions. Some excellent photographs by Schlemmer, our neighbour from Montreux, recorded the aspect of our interviews.

"Evening, at seven o'clock, prayers were held in the first-floor salon. With lights lowered, the Indian seated on the carpet, and the little assembly of the faithful grouped around; there was a suite of three beautiful chants—the first an extract from the Gita, the second an ancient hymn from the Sanskrit texts which Gandhi has translated, and the third a canticle of Rama and Sita, intoned by the warm, grave voice of Mira.

"Gandhi held other prayers at three o'clock in the morning, for which, in London, he used to wake his harassed staff, although he had not retired until one. This little man, so frail in appearance, is tireless; fatigue is a word which does not exist in his vocabulary. He could calmly answer for hours the heckling of a crowd, as he did at Lausanne and Geneva, without a muscle of his face twitching. Seated on a table, motionless, his voice always clear and calm, he replied to his adversaries open or masked—and they were not lacking at Geneva—giving them rude truths which left them quite silenced and suffocated.

"The Roman bourgeoisie, and the nationalists, who had at first received him with crafty looks, quivered with rage when he left. I believe that if his stay had lasted any longer, the public meetings would have been forbidden. He expressed himself as unequivocally as possible on the questions of national armaments and the conflict between capital and labour. I was largely responsible for steering him on this latter course.

"His mind proceeds through successive experiments into action and he follows a straight line, but he never stops, and one would risk error in attempting to judge him by what he said ten years ago because his thought is in constant revolution. I will give you a little example of it that is characteristic.

"He was requested at Lausanne to define what he understood by God. He explained how, among the noblest attributes which the Hindu scriptures ascribed to God, he had in his youth chosen the word 'truth' as most truly defining the essential element. He had said, 'God is Truth.' 'But,' he added, 'two years ago I advanced another step. I now say, 'Truth is God.' For, even the atheists do not doubt the necessity for the power of truth. In their passion for discovering the truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the existence of God, and, from their point of view, they are right.' You will understand from this single trait the boldness and independence of this religious spirit from the Orient. I noted in him traits similar to Vivekananda.

"And yet not a single political ruse catches him unprepared. And his own politics are to say everything that he thinks to everybody, not concealing a thing.

"On the last evening, after the prayers, Gandhi asked me to play him a little of Beethoven. He does not know Beethoven, but he

knows that Beethoven has been the intermediary between Mira and me, and consequently between Mira and himself, and that, in the final count, it is to Beethoven that the gratitude of us all must go. I played him the Andante of the Fifth Symphony. To that I added, 'Les Champ Elysees' of Gluck, the page for the orchestra and the air for the flutes.

"He is very sensitive to the religious chants of his country, which somewhat resemble the most beautiful of our Gregorian melodies and he has worked to assemble them. We also exchanged our ideas on art, from which he does not separate his conception of truth, nor from his conception of truth that of joy, which he thinks truth should bring. But it follows of itself that for this heroic nature, joy does not come without effort, not even life itself without hardship. 'The seeker after truth hath a heart tender as the lotus, and hard as granite.'

"Here, my friend, are a few hints of those days of ours together on which I have taken detailed notes. What I do not dwell on to you is the hurricane of intruders, loiterers, and half-wits which this visit loosed on our two villas. No, the telephone never ceased ringing; photographers in ambuscades let fly their fusillades from behind every bush. The milkmen's syndicate at Leman informed me that during all the time of this sojourn with me of the 'King of India' they intended to assume complete responsibility for his victualling. We received letters from 'Sons of God'. Some Italians wrote to the Mahatma beseeching him to indicate for them the ten lucky numbers for the next drawing of his weekly national lottery!

"My sister, having survived, has gone to take ten days' rest at a cure in Zurich. She returns shortly. I have entirely lost the gift of sleep. If you find it, send it to me by registered mail."

Stab In The Back

1932

During Gandhi's absence, situation in India rapidly deteriorated. The truce from the very outset had been one-sided; the repression had continued. Bardoli inquiry collapsed, situation in U. P. worsened and the tension increased in Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province.

Bengal was seething with indignation. Two of the detenus had been killed and twenty injured in firing at Hijli camp. The terrorists raised their heads and the Government intensified repression, and promulgated ordinances.

Events had developed into a crisis in the Frontier Province. The authorities looked askance at the rising influence of Ghaffar Khan who was touring round the villages to prepare the people for any contingency. A Red Shirt camp was set up in the Peshawar district early in December to train the volunteers. The Frontier Provincial Congress Committee resolved that the Prime Minister's announcement at the Round Table Conference was unsatisfactory, and that Ghaffar Khan should proceed to Bombay to discuss with Gandhi the new situation. The Government had announced a durbar and invited Ghaffar Khan and also Dr. Khan Sahib but they refused to participate in any discussion over the head of the Congress. Immediately the authorities promulgated ordinances and Ghaffar Khan along with his colleagues was arrested on December 24, 1931, four days before Gandhi's arrival in India.

In December an ordinance applicable to the United Provinces was issued by the Viceroy for preventing the proposed no-rent campaign among the agricultural tenants. In pursuance thereof, order was served upon Jawaharlal Nehru, the General Secretary of the Congress, forbidding him to leave the Allahabad district without the permission of the district officer. He was also told that he must not attend any public meeting or any public function, or speak in

public, or write anything in any newspaper or leaflet. A similar order had also been served on his colleagues. Nehru wrote to the district magistrate informing him that he did not propose to take any orders from the officials. On December 26, while he was on his way to Bombay to meet Gandhi, he was arrested.

What Gandhi called "goading" had been going on all the year and he himself was a victim of a deception. An alleged interview, cabled from Rome, credited him with a statement that the struggle would be resumed at once. Gandhi on board S.S. *Pilsna* cabled a categorical denial. He had not given any press interview in Rome. British newspapers and public men refused to accept the explanation and called Gandhi a liar.

As soon as he landed in Bombay, December 28, 1931, Gandhi observed that he regarded these ordinances as a challenge to the Congress. At the same time, he reiterated that he would try every means to avoid another fiery ordeal. This he repeated at a public meeting held at Azad Maidan that evening, when he condemned the Bengal terrorist activities, as also the Government's attempt to "unman a whole race". No less than five special ordinances were in operation. "I take it," Gandhi said, "that these are Christmas gifts from Lord Willingdon, our Christian Viceroy. Even if there is a single ray of hope, I will preserve and not abandon negotiations. But if I don't succeed, I will invite you to join me in the struggle which will be a fight to a finish." In the last fight the people had to face lathis, but this time they would have to face bullets. "I would not flinch from sacrificing even a million lives for India's liberty. I told this to the English people in England."

He lost no time and sat with the Working Committee to discuss the situation. Some members held the view that the policy of the Government meant a complete breach between the Congress and the Government, and that the further negotiations were useless. He advised the committee to defer their decision till he had a chance of ascertaining the Government's view, of which he wanted to be sure before launching a struggle. It was, therefore, suggested that the committee should adjourn, and that Gandhi immediately seek an interview with the Viceroy. This proposal, however, was vetoed by the majority of the members, and it was decided that Gandhi should send a telegram to the Viceroy acquainting him with the Congress viewpoint. Gandhi, thereupon, on December 29, sent a

cable to Lord Willingdon: "I was unprepared on landing yesterday to find Frontier and United Provinces ordinances, shootings in Frontier and arrests of my valued comrades in both, on the top of the Bengal ordinance waiting me. I do not know whether I am to regard these as an indication that friendly relations between us are closed, or whether you expect me still to see you and receive guidance from you as to the course I am to pursue in advising the Congress. I would esteem a wire in reply."

Two days later the Viceroy's reply arrived. In a long telegram Lord Willingdon justified in detail the ordinances by reference to the events that, in Government's opinion, had inevitably led up to them. Addressing Gandhi, he wrote: "You have yourself been absent from India on the business of the Round Table Conference and, in the light of the attitude which you have observed there, His Excellency is unwilling to believe that you have personally any share in the responsibility for, or that you approve of, the recent activities of the Congress in the United Provinces and also in the North-West Frontier Province. If this is so, then he is willing to see you, and give you his views as to the way in which you can best exert your influence to maintain the spirit of co-operation, which animated the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. But His Excellency feels bound to emphasize that he will not be prepared to discuss with you the measures which the Government of India, with the full approval of His Majesty's Government, have found it necessary to adopt in Bengal, the United Provinces, and the North-West Frontier Province. These measures must in any case be kept in force, until they have served the purpose for which they were imposed, namely, the preservation of law and order essential to good government. On receipt of your reply His Excellency proposes to publish this correspondence."

In the course of a reply to the Viceroy, dated January 1, 1932, Gandhi declared that, in his opinion, the constitutional issues had dwindled into insignificance in the face of ordinances and action taken thereunder. He repudiated all suggestion that the Congress desired to promote disorder in any shape or form, and denied any justification for going outside the ordinary law, in order to deal with the disorders complained of by the Government, by resort to ordinances which he denounced as legalized Government terrorism. Continuing, Gandhi said:

"I heartily assent to your proposition laid down in your telegram that co-operation must be mutual. But your telegram leads me irresistibly to the conclusion that His Excellency demands co-operation from the Congress without returning any on behalf of the Government. I cannot read in any other way his peremptory refusal to discuss these matters which, as I have endeavoured to show, have at least two sides. The popular side I have put as I understand it, but before committing myself to a definite judgement I was anxious to understand the order, that is, the Government side, and then tender my advice to the Congress. With reference to the last paragraph of your telegram, I may not repudiate moral liability for the actions of my colleagues whilst I was absent from India, and it was because it was necessary for me to advise the Working Committee of the Congress, and in order to complete my knowledge, I sought with an open mind and with the best of intentions an interview with His Excellency and deliberately asked for his guidance. I cannot conceal from His Excellency my opinion that the reply that he has condescended to send me was hardly a return for my friendly and well meant approach.

"And if it is not yet too late, I would ask His Excellency to reconsider his decision and see me as a friend, without imposing any conditions as to the scope or subject of discussion, and I on my part can promise that I would study with an open mind all the facts that he might place before me. I would unhesitatingly and willingly go to the respective provinces and, with the aid of the authorities, study both sides of the question, and if I came to the conclusion, after such a study, that the people were in the wrong and that the Working Committee, including myself, were misled as to the correct position, and that Government was right, I should have no hesitation whatsoever in making that open confession and guiding Government accordingly. Along with my desire and willingness to co-operate with Government I must place my limitations before His Excellency. Non-violence is my absolute creed. I believe that civil disobedience is not only the natural right of a people, especially when they have no effective voice in their own Government, but that it is also a substitute for violence or armed rebellion. I can never, therefore, deny my creed. In pursuance thereof and on the strength of uncontradicted reports, supported by the recent activities of the Government of India, to the effect that there may

be no other opportunity for me to guide the country, the committee has accepted my advice and passed a resolution tentatively sketching a plan of civil disobedience. I am sending herewith the text of the resolution. If His Excellency thinks it worth while to see me, the operation of the resolution will be suspended pending our discussion, in the hope that it may result in the resolution being finally given up. I admit that the correspondence between His Excellency and myself is of such grave importance as not to brook delay in publication. I am, therefore, sending my telegram, your reply, this rejoinder, and the Working Committee's resolution for publication."

The Congress plan included vigorous boycott of all foreign cloth, whether British or of other countries, picketing of liquor shops, and also disobedience of "non-moral laws". The Working Committee was of opinion that "these several acts and others of lesser gravity that have taken place in some other provinces, and the telegram from His Excellency seem to make further co-operation with the Government on the part of the Congress impossible, unless Government's policy is radically changed. These acts and telegram betray no intention on the part of the bureaucracy to hand over power to the people and are calculated to demoralize the nation. They also betray want of faith in the Congress, from which co-operation is expected by the Government."

The Working Committee demanded an impartial and public inquiry into the ordinance question. The committee passed a resolution that the Prime Minister's declarations were unsatisfactory and wholly inadequate in terms of the Congress demands. In the event of a satisfactory response not coming from the Government, the Working Committee called upon the nation to resume civil disobedience. It appealed to the free people of the world "to watch the struggle in the belief that the non-violent method adopted by the Congress gives it a world-wide importance, and if the method becomes demonstrably successful, it is likely to furnish an effective moral equivalent to war."

On January 2, the Government sent a reply to Gandhi:

"They regret to observe that under your guidance the Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution which involves general revival of civil disobedience in India unless certain conditions are satisfied, which are clearly stated in your telegram and resolution.

His Excellency and his Government regard this attitude as the more deplorable in view of the declared intentions of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India to expedite the policy of constitutional reform contained in the Premier's statement. And no Government, consistent with the discharge of its responsibility, can be subject to any condition sought to be imposed under the menace of unlawful action by any organization, nor can the Government of India accept the position implied in your telegram that its policy should be dependent on the judgement of yourself as to necessity of the measures which the Government has taken after the most careful and thorough consideration of the facts and after all other possible remedies have been exhausted.

"His Excellency and the Government can hardly believe that you or the Working Committee can contemplate that His Excellency can invite you with the hope of any advantage to an interview held under the threat of the resumption of civil disobedience. His Excellency and his Government must hold you and the Congress responsible for all the consequences which may follow from the action which the Congress have proclaimed as their intention of taking and to meet which the Government will take the necessary measures."

On the morning of January 3, Gandhi addressed the following telegram to the Viceroy:

"I cannot help expressing deep regret for the decision of His Excellency and his Government. Surely it is wrong to describe an honest expression of opinion as a threat. And may I remind the Government that the Delhi negotiations were opened and carried on whilst civil disobedience was on, and that when the pact was made, it was not given up but only discontinued. This position was reasserted and accepted by His Excellency and his Government, in Simla, in September last, prior to my departure for London. Although I had made it clear that under certain circumstances the Congress might have to resume civil disobedience, the Government did not break off negotiations. That it was made clear by the Government that the civil disobedience carried with it the penalty for disobedience merely proves what civil resisters bargain for, but does not in any way affect my argument. Had the Government resented that attitude, it was open to them not to send me to London. On the contrary my departure had His Excellency's blessings.

"Nor is it fair or correct to suggest that I have ever advanced the claim that any policy of the Government should be dependent on my judgement. But I submit that any popular and constitutional Government would always welcome and sympathetically consider the suggestions made by public bodies and their representatives and assist them with all available information about their acts or ordinances of which public opinion may disapprove. I claim that my messages have no other meaning. Time alone will show whose position was justified.

"Meanwhile, I wish to assure the Government that every endeavour will be made on the part of the Congress to carry on the campaign without malice and in a strictly non-violent manner. It was hardly necessary to remind me that the Congress and I, its humble representative, are responsible for all the consequences of our actions."

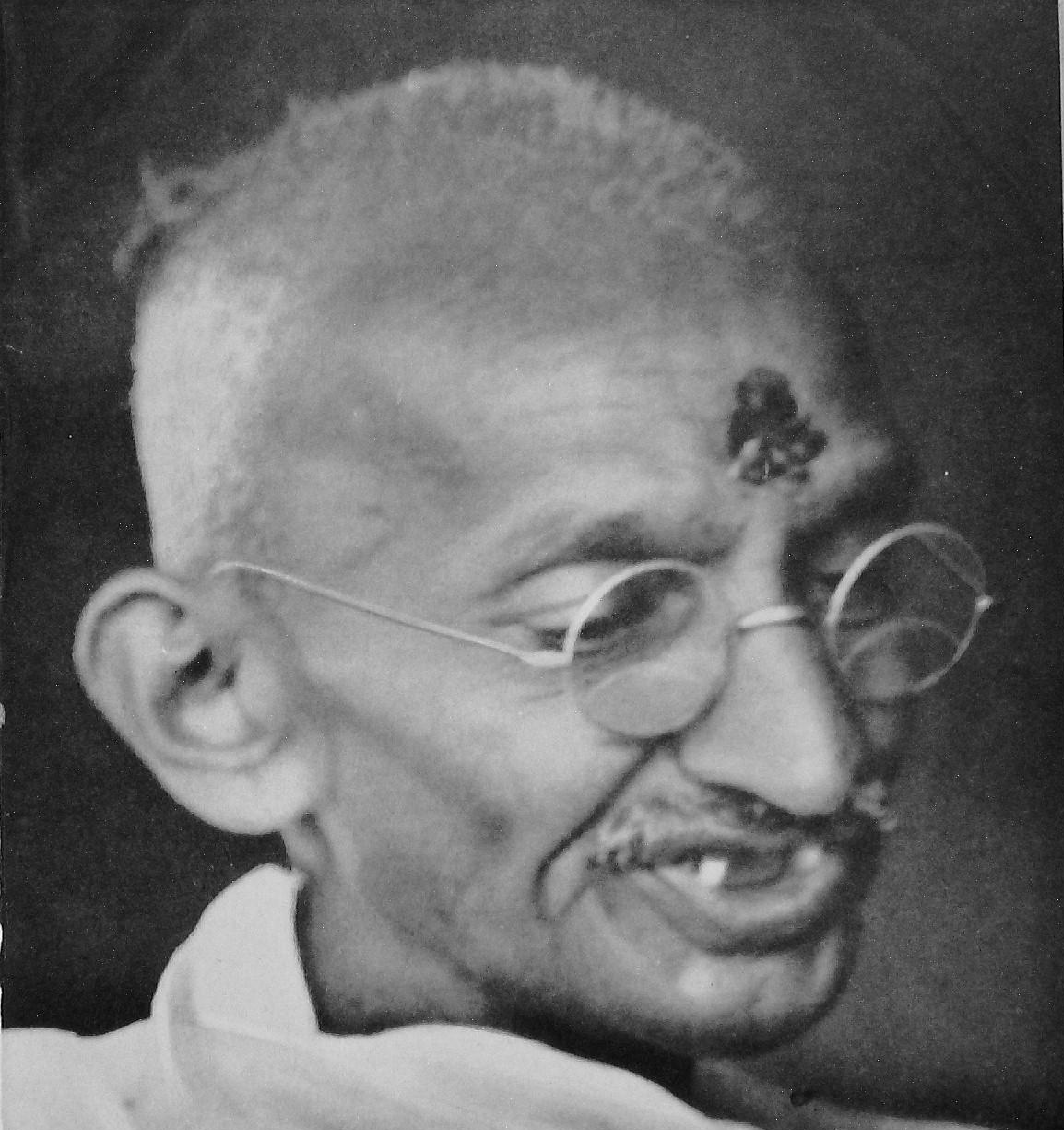
One of Gandhi's acts, before he was arrested in the small hours of the morning of January 4, was to send gifts to the British detectives who had been detailed to guard him in England and Europe. When Devadas woke him up with the news that the escort had arrived to arrest him, it was his day of silence. He passed a note to Father Verrier Elwin, an English admirer, in which he wrote: "I would like you yourself to tell your countrymen that I love them even as I love my own countrymen. I have never done anything towards them in hatred or malice, and God willing, I shall never do anything in that manner in future." His message to his own countrymen was: "Infinite is God's mercy. Never swerve from truth and non-violence, never turn your back, and sacrifice your lives and all to win swaraj."

From Bombay Gandhi was taken to Yeravda Prison and under Regulation 25 of 1827 he was placed under restraint "during the pleasure of Government". On the same day, the negotiations were broken, and swift and sharp the blow fell everywhere. Vallabhbhai Patel was arrested and detained along with Gandhi. Jawaharlal Nehru was tried that day and was given the sentence of two years' rigorous imprisonment. Four ordinances were promulgated, giving the most far-reaching powers to the magistrates and the police officers. Civil liberty ceased to exist, and both person and property could be seized by the authorities. It was a declaration of a kind of siege for the whole of India. Lord Irwin took occasion to say in

London, that if he had been still in India, he too would have done the same.

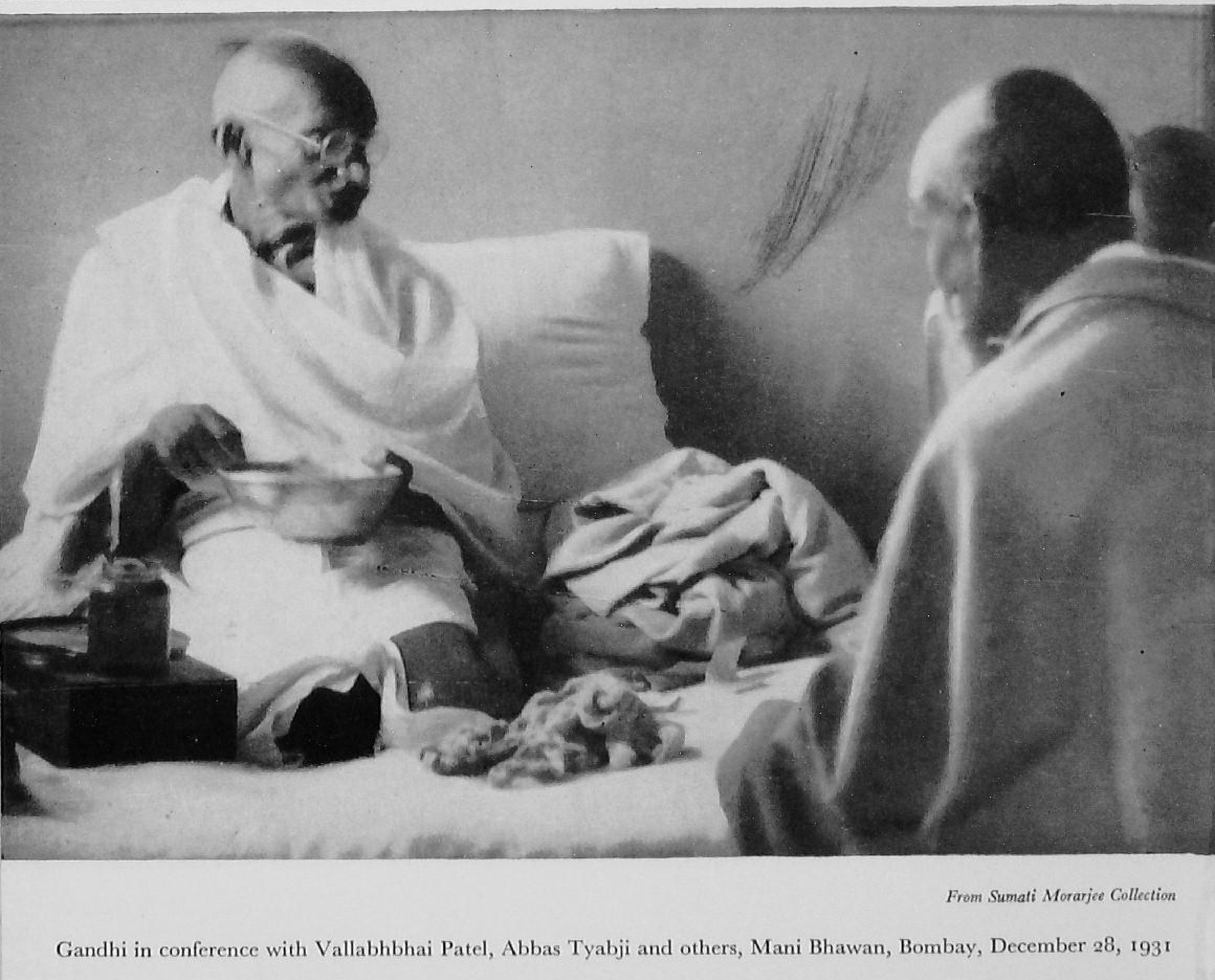
Rajendra Prasad, who was appointed Congress President in succession to Sardar Patel, was arrested on January 5, and Dr. Ansari who succeeded him, on the 8th. By January 10, leading Congressmen all over India were behind the bars. The Government, with Sir Samuel Hoare at the helm in England and Lord Willingdon in India, was in no mood for half measures and within a short time the number of ordinances reached thirteen, which were described by the Secretary of State for India, in March, as drastic and severe. "They cover almost every activity of Indian life." The Congress had been declared illegal—the Working Committee at the top, the provincial committees, and several local committees. Together with the Congress all manner of allied or sympathetic organizations had been declared unlawful—the kisan sabhas, youth leagues, students' associations, national universities and schools, the Congress hospitals, swadeshi concerns, libraries. The lists were formidable, and contained many hundreds of names for each province. Under the ban about 7,000 arrests were made, including 200 of the most prominent Congress leaders. Churchill with his characteristic bluntness observed that the ordinances were "more drastic than any that were required since the mutiny." A new feature of one of the ordinances was that parents and guardians were to be punished for the offences of their children or wards. The general feature of the Government's policy on this occasion was a widespread confiscation of property, houses, motor-cars, moneys in banks, etc., both of the organizations and individuals. And the determined policy of the authorities seemed to be to make the lot of the political prisoners worse than that of convicts. Inspector-general of prisons issued a confidential circular to all the prisons stressing that civil disobedience prisoners must be "dealt with grimly". Whipping became a frequent punishment. Samuel Hoare told the House of Commons that there was to be no "drawn battle this time".

But even these repressive measures did not suffice to keep India quiet. The boycott and civil disobedience movement continued, and risings, strikes and disturbances broke out in various parts of the country. During the first four months, there were 80,000 arrests. The people continued to struggle, but it was a struggle without a leadership. The activities of the civil resisters were of the usual



Courtesy: N. J. Nalawala

Gandhi on his return to India, Bombay, December 28, 1931

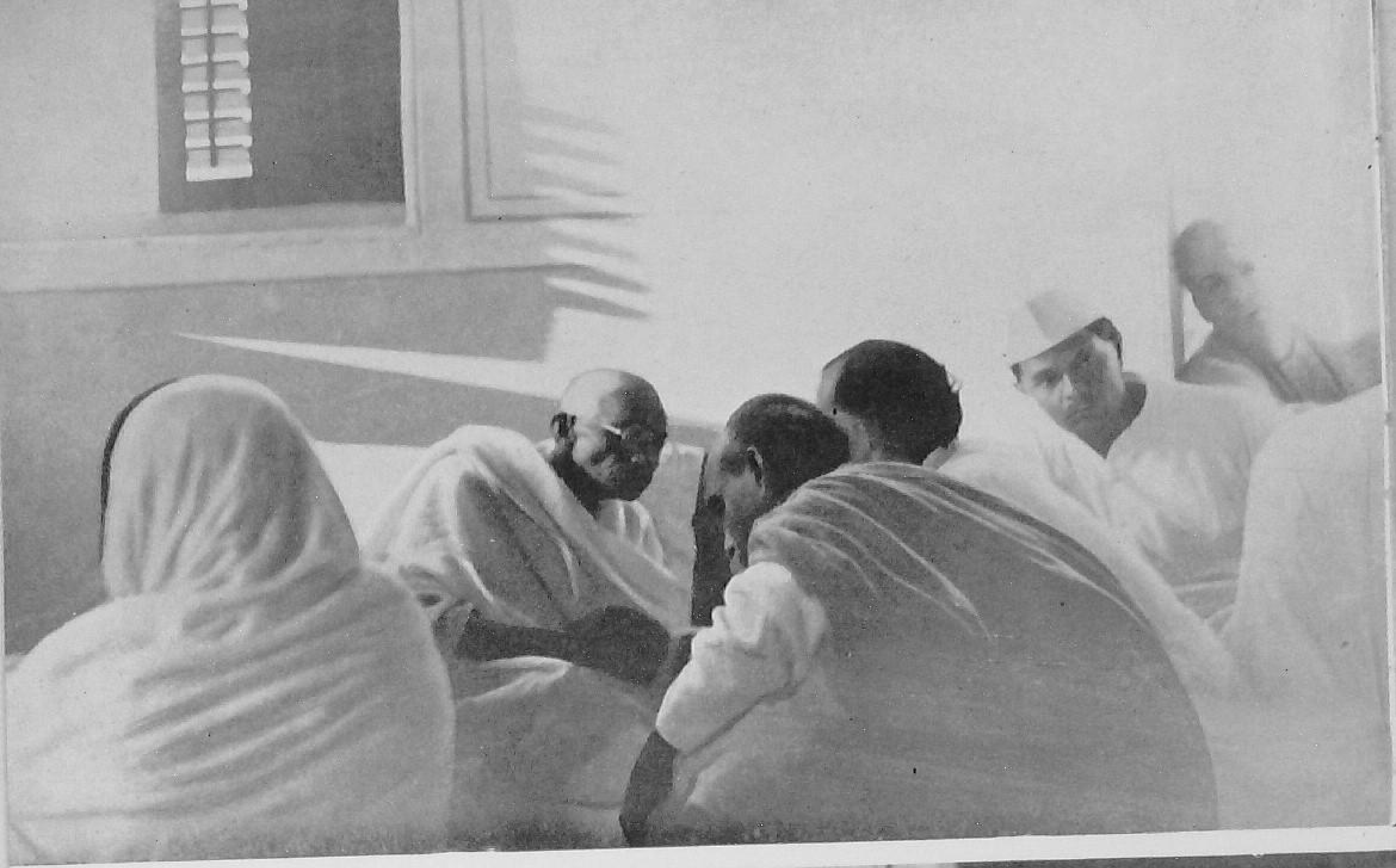


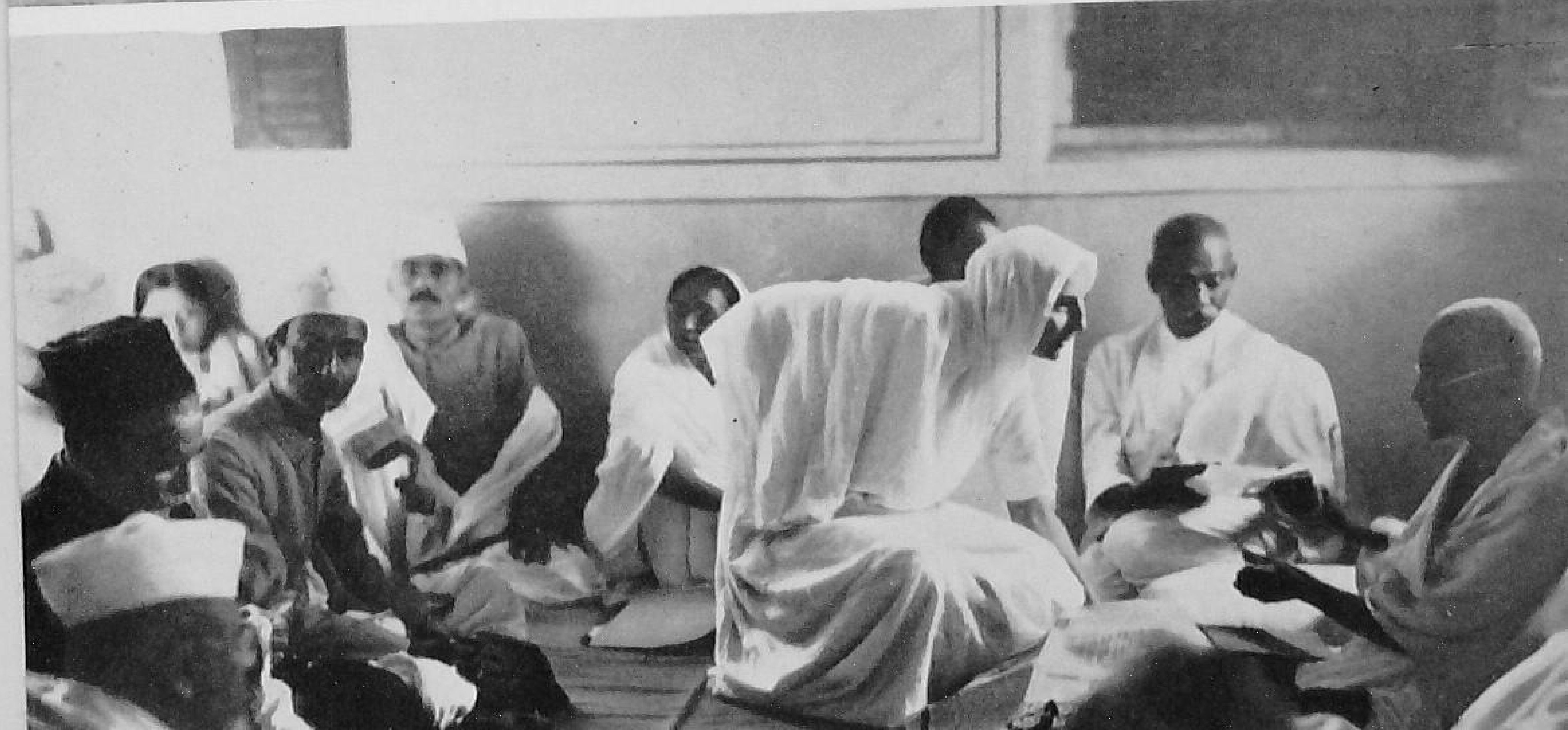
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi in conference with Vallabhbhai Patel, Abbas Tyabji and others, Mani Bhawan, Bombay, December 28, 1931

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

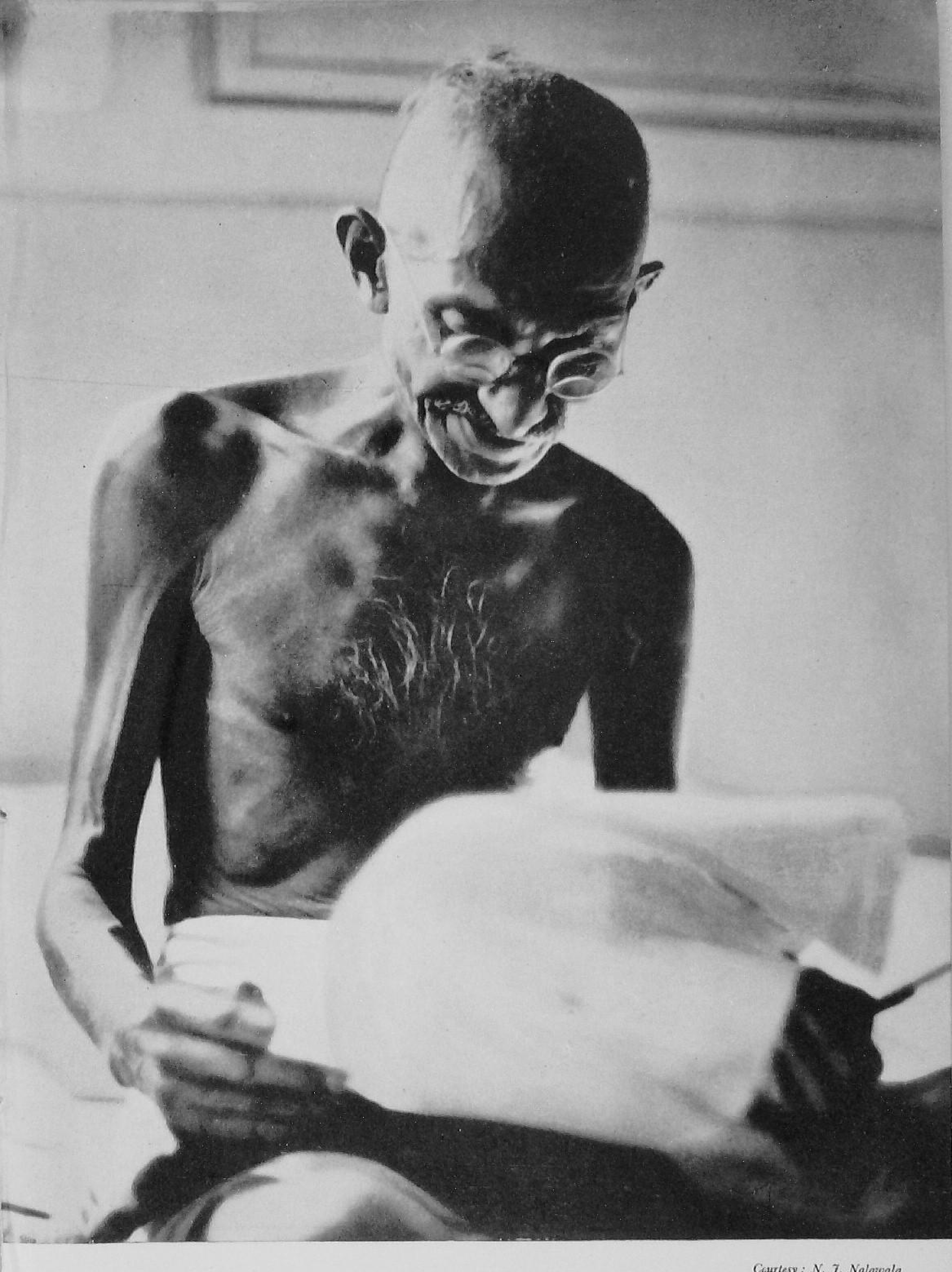
Gandhi addressing a public meeting in Bombay on the first day of his arrival from R.T.C.





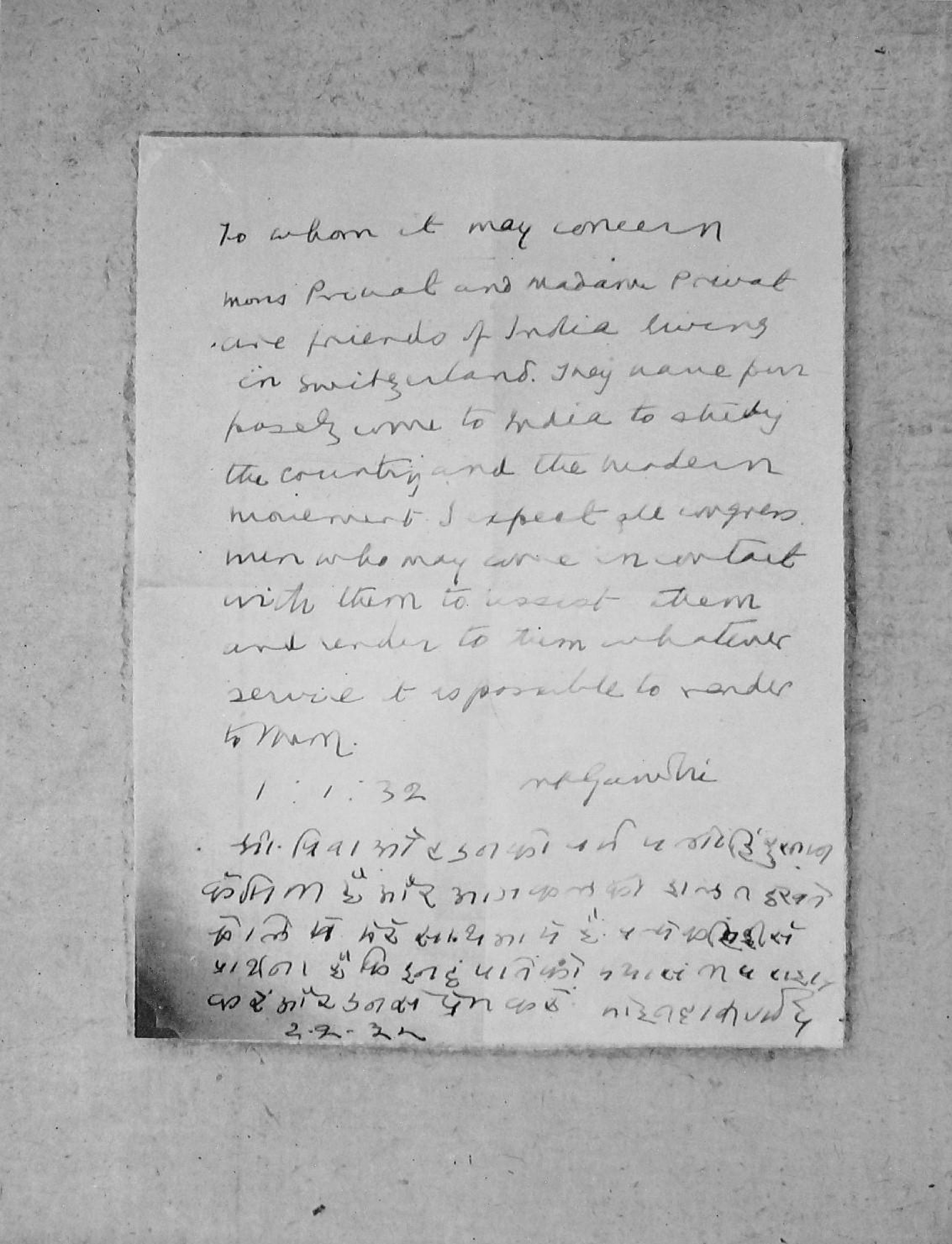
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

At the Working Committee meeting with Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Ansari, Azad, and other members, Mani Bhawan, Bombay, December 29, 1931



Courtesy : N. J. Nalawala

Engrossed in studying the situation, Bombay, December 1931



To whom it may concern
Mons Privat and Madame Privat
are friends of India living
in Switzerland. They have pur-
posely come to India to study
the country and the modern
movement. I expect all congress-
men who may come in contact
with them to assist them
and render to them whatever
service it is possible to render
to them.

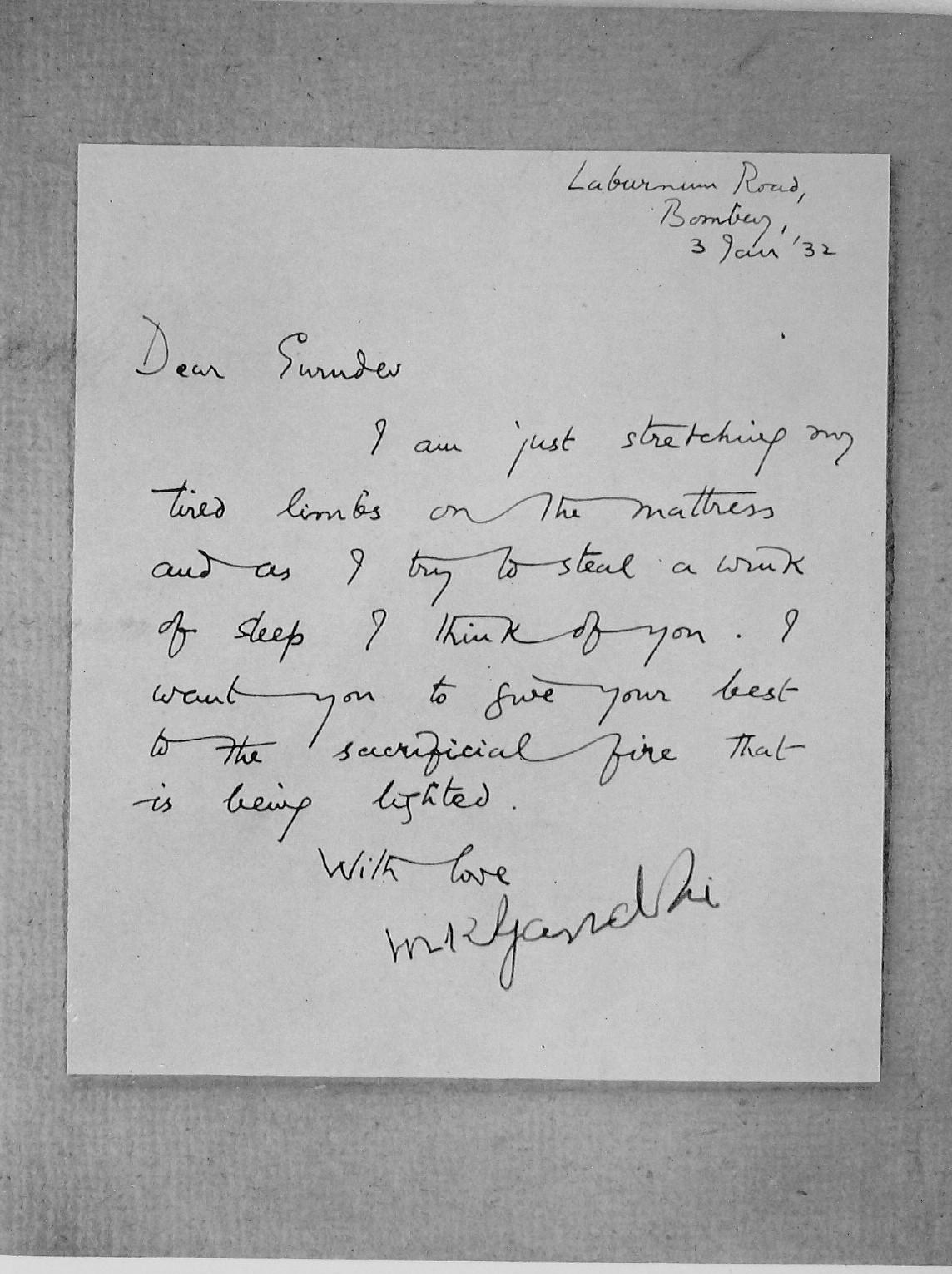
1:1:32 M K Gandhi

[illegible]

2-2-32

Courtesy : Madame Privat

Gandhi's letter of introduction written in English and Hindustani for Mr. Privat and his wife, January 1, 1932



Laburnum Road,
Bombay,
3 Jan '32

Dear Gurudev

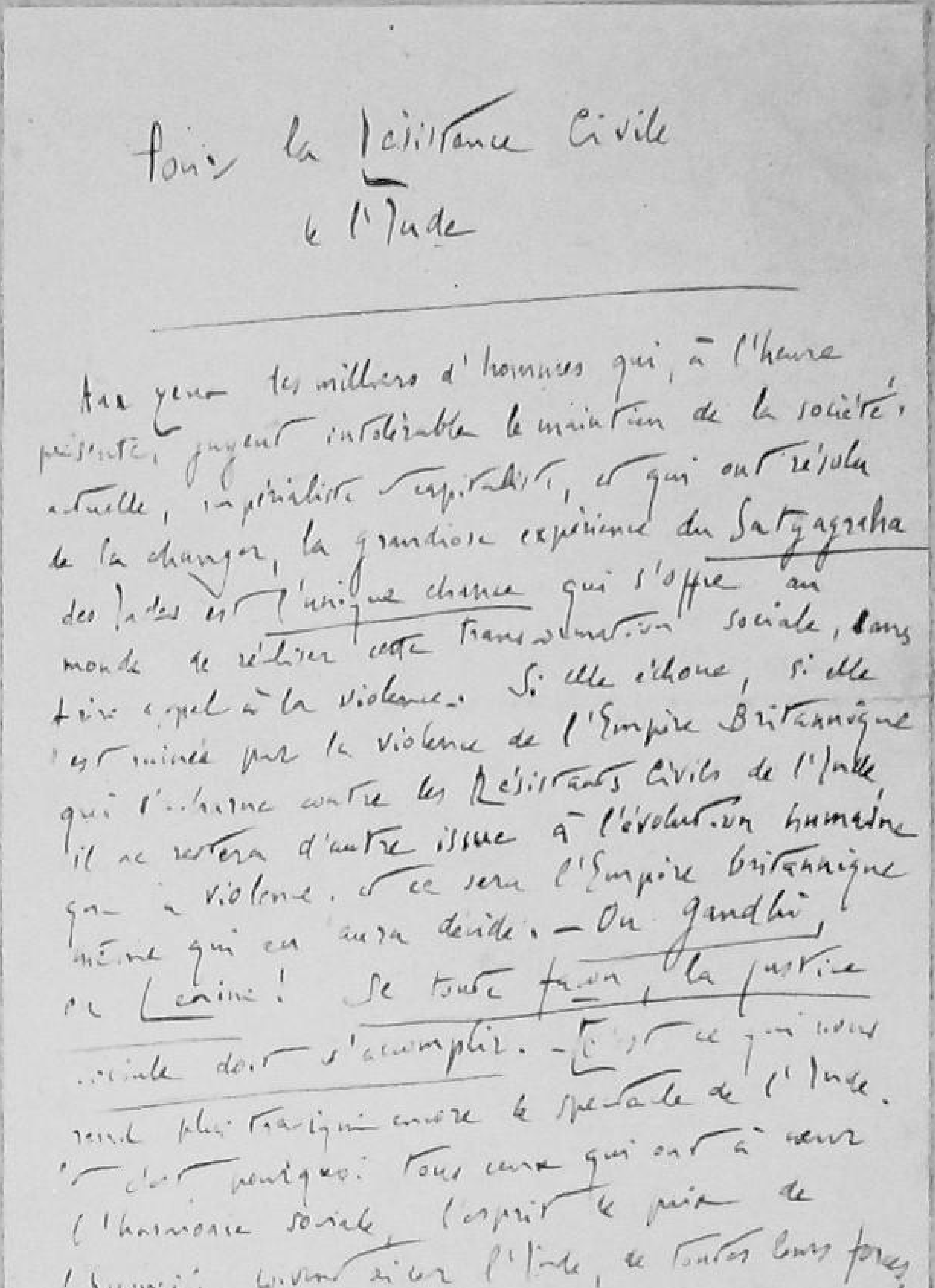
I am just stretching my tired limbs on the mattress and as I try to steal a wink of sleep I think of you. I want you to give your best to the sacrificial fire that is being lighted.

With love

M K Gandhi

Courtesy: Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's letter to Rabindranath Tagore, dated Bombay, January 3, 1932



Pour la Résistance Civile de l'Inde

Aux yeux des milliers d'hommes qui, à l'heure présente, jugent intolérable le maintien de la société actuelle, impérialiste capitaliste, et qui ont résolu de la changer, la grandiose expérience du Satyagraha des Indes est l'unique chance qui s'offre au monde de réaliser cette transformation sociale, sans faire appel à la violence. Si elle échoue, si elle est minée par la violence de l'Empire Britannique qui s'acharne contre les Résistants Civils de l'Inde, il ne restera d'autre issue à l'évolution humaine que la violence. Et ce sera l'Empire Britannique même qui en aura décidé. — Ou Gandhi, ou Lenine! De toute façon, la justice sociale doit s'accomplir. — C'est ce qui nous rend plus tragique encore le spectacle de l'Inde. C'est pourquoi tous ceux qui ont à cœur l'harmonie sociale, l'esprit de paix de l'humanité, doivent aider l'Inde, de toutes leurs forces.

Car si l'Inde du satyagraha succombait dans la bataille, ce serait le Christ même qui serait frappé, d'un suprême coup de lance, sur la croix. Et cette fois, il ne ressusciterait plus.

Romain Rolland

Janvier 1932

Courtesy : Frank Moraes

"It is either Gandhi or Lenin" wrote Romain Rolland in his support to civil disobedience in India, dated January 1932

pattern ranging from the holding of banned meetings and processions to refusing on police parole or other kind of official restraint order. The boycott programme was very extensive affecting even the banks, insurance companies and the bullion exchange. All British institutions came under intensive boycott. The no-tax campaign was also much in evidence.

Besides these activities, there were other programmes organized, or were attempted to be organized, which resulted in several places, especially in Allahabad and Cawnpore, in heavy clashes between the demonstrators and police. In Allahabad, Jawaharlal's old mother received severe beating during a demonstration, and she fell down unconscious. The wrath of the Government fell particularly on the women, as the authorities had somehow got hold of the idea that the Congress would exploit them for the campaign.

A few days after the National Week, the Congress announced its decision to hold a session on April 23. It came under a Government ban, but the session was held in spite of police vigilance under the Clock Tower in Chandni Chowk. Malaviya who was to preside over the session was arrested on his way to Delhi. The Congress session consisted in the hurried gathering of twos and threes, and about 500 delegates reiterated the Working Committee resolutions. The police soon appeared on the scene and arrested 180 delegates and lathi-charged the others. The incident in Delhi was not a solitary demonstration. Numerous provincial, district and sub-divisional meetings were held to broadcast the Congress deliberations.

The Congress flag was held aloft everywhere, but the initiative was definitely with the Government. Samuel Hoare said that though the dogs barked, the caravan moved on. The Government countered the Congress with every resource at their command. A number of municipalities were forced to haul down the Tricolour to make place for the Union Jack. As a province, U.P. kept in the front of the campaign. To a greater or less extent, all the provinces went through the fire of repression but the Frontier Province and Bengal suffered most. Punitive police were often stationed and it was the practice all over India to impose heavy collective fines on villages and occasionally on towns. Some parts of Bengal presented an extraordinary spectacle. The Government treated the entire population of certain districts and especially the Hindus as hostile, and everywhere and everyone—man or woman, boy or girl, between twelve

and twenty-five—had to carry identity cards. There were externments and internments, dress was regulated, schools were in many cases closed, bicycles were not allowed, movements had to be reported to the police, curfew, sunset law, military marches, punitive police, collective fines, and host of other repressive measures. The terrorists raised their heads. "I fired at the Governor, impelled by love of my country, which is being repressed," said Bina Das, while pleading guilty in court. "I thought that the only way to death was by offering myself at the feet of my country, and thus make an end of all my sufferings. I invite the attention of all to the present situation created by the measures, which can unsex even a frail woman like myself brought up in all the best traditions of Indian womanhood."

In a letter to an English friend, Rolland wrote:

"In the eyes of thousands of men, today, who consider the maintenance of the present form of society—imperialist and capitalist—intolerable, and who are determined to change it, the magnificent experiment in India of satyagraha is the only chance offered to the world of bringing about this social transformation without appeal to violence. If it fails—if it is ruined by the violence of the British Empire, pitting itself against India's civil disobedience—there will be no other issue for human evolution but violence; and it will be the British Empire itself which has decided it—it is either Gandhi or Lenin. In any case social justice will be done.

"It is this which makes the spectacle of India so much the more tragic. This is why all who have at heart the harmony of society, and the spirit of peace and the Gospel, must give their help, sparing no effort, to India. For, if the India of satyagraha were to go down in the battle, it is Christ himself who would be pierced by it, with a supreme lance-thrust, on the cross. And this time there would be no resurrection."

There was at first surprise and indignation at the Government's policy of repression. Soon breaking of the laws became the order of the day. Locked up in Yeravda Prison, Gandhi now began to bestir himself. On March 11, he wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare about the ruthless repression and the impending communal award by the Prime Minister. He had thought at first that he would await for the announcement and then take most appropriate action. But in fairness to the British Government he decided to give them a previous notice

telling them respectfully that "in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, I must fast unto death". Gandhi wrote:

"You will perhaps recollect that at the end of my speech at the Round Table Conference when the minorities' claim was presented, I had said that I should resist with my life the grant of separate electorate to the Depressed Classes. This was not said in the heat of the moment nor by way of rhetoric. It was meant to be a serious statement. In pursuance of that statement I had hoped on my return to India to mobilize public opinion against separate electorate, at any rate for the Depressed Classes. But it was not to be.

"From the papers I am permitted to read, I observe that at any moment His Majesty's Government may declare their decision. At first I had thought that if the decision was found to create separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, I should take such steps as I might then consider necessary to give effect to my vow. But I feel it would be unfair to the British Government for me to act without giving previous notice. Naturally, they could not attach the significance I give to my statement.

"I need hardly reiterate all the objections of the separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. I feel as if I was one of them. Their case stands on a wholly different footing from that of others. I am not against their representation in the legislatures. I should favour every one of their adults registered as voters, irrespective of education or property qualifications, even though the franchise test may be stricter for others. But I hold that separate electorate is harmful for them and for Hinduism, whatever it may be from the purely political standpoint. To appreciate the harm that these separate electorates would do them, one has to know how they are distributed among the so-called Caste Hindus, and how dependent they are on the latter. So far as Hinduism is concerned, separate electorate would simply vivisect and disrupt it.

"For me, the question of these classes is predominantly moral and religious. The political aspect, important though it is, dwindles into insignificance compared to the moral and religious issue.

"You will have to appreciate my feelings in this matter by remembering that I have been interested in the condition of these classes from my boyhood, and have more than once staked my all for their sake. I say this not to pride myself in any way. For, I feel

that no penance that the Hindus may do can in any way compensate for the calculated degradation to which they have consigned the Depressed Classes for centuries.

"But I know that separate electorate is neither a penance nor a remedy for the crushing degradation they have groaned under. I, therefore, respectfully inform His Majesty's Government, that in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, I must fast unto death.

"I am painfully conscious of the fact that such a step, whilst I am a prisoner, must cause grave embarrassment to His Majesty's Government, and that it will be regarded by many as highly improper on the part of one holding my position to introduce into the political field methods which they would describe as hysterical if not much worse. All I can urge in defence is that, for me, the contemplated step is not a method, it is part of my being. It is the call of conscience which I dare not disobey, even though it may cost whatever reputation for sanity I may possess. And so far as I can see now, my discharge from imprisonment would not make the duty of fasting any the less imperative. I am hoping, however, that all my fears are wholly unjustified and that the British Government have no intention whatever of creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes."

He referred to another matter that was agitating his mind, "which may also enforce a similar fast". It was the way the repression was going on: "Repression appears to me to be crossing what might be called legitimate bounds. A Governmental terrorism is spreading through the land. Free speech has been stifled. Goondaism is being practised in the name of law and order. Women who have come out for public service stand in fear of their honour being insulted. And all this is being done, in order to crush the spirit of freedom which the Congress represents."

After a month, on April 13, Sir Samuel Hoare's reply arrived. All that he could promise was that Gandhi's views would be fully "taken into account", before the final decision was arrived at. "I can only promise that we intend to give any decision that may be necessary, solely and only, upon the merits of the case," he added. "Lord Lothian's committee has not yet completed its tour, and it must be some weeks before we can receive any conclusion, which it may have arrived at. You would await the committee's report,

you would then give it your fullest consideration. More than this, I cannot say." As for the repression, the Secretary of State stated that it was necessary for the purpose of maintaining the essentials of law and order. The contents of the correspondence were an absolute secret except for Sardar Patel and Mahadev Desai, who had been confined with Gandhi, in a special yard, in complete isolation from all the other political prisoners.

While repression was rampant, the British propaganda machine was busy painting a rosy picture of India. In India itself no newspaper dared to print the truth for fear of consequences—even the publication of names or photographs of the persons arrested was an offence. To divert the attention of the people the experts with their committees came out to India, in March, to prepare for the final stages of the Round Table Conference—the Franchise Committee under Lord Lothian, the Federal Finance Committee under Lord Percy, and the States' Inquiry Committee under Mr. Davidson. The communalists began fighting for seats in the councils and the whole atmosphere was surcharged with bad feeling; serious riots were the order of the day. Hindu Mahasabha leaders and Muslim League leaders, Sikh leaders and the Depressed Class leaders vied with one another in holding conferences to put forward their own pet theories. Iqbal, presiding over the All-India Muslim Conference, condemned the civil disobedience movement and demanded expedition of communal settlement in India.

On August 17, Ramsay MacDonald announced the provisional scheme of minority representation, commonly called the Communal Award. The scheme determined the number of seats in the provincial legislatures at approximately double the number in the existing councils. Separate electorates were retained for the minority communities and for the Muslims both in Bengal and the Punjab, despite their numerical majority. The weightage was also conceded to the Muslims in the provinces in which they were in a minority and to the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab. The Depressed Classes were now recognized as a minority community entitled to separate electorate. While creating a number of specially reserved constituencies for the Depressed Class, it gave them the additional right to contest seats in the general constituencies, with this provision that special electorates and reservation of seats would lapse after twenty years automatically.

The Premier's scheme confirmed the worst fears of Gandhi. On August 18 he wrote to Ramsay MacDonald about his resolve to resist the scheme by resorting to "a perpetual fast unto death" from September 20. "Dear Friend," he began:

"There can be no doubt that Sir Samuel Hoare has showed you and the cabinet my letter to him of 11th March on the question of the representation of the Depressed Classes. That letter should be treated as part of this letter and be read together with this.

"I have read the British Government's decision on the representation of minorities and have slept over it. In pursuance of my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and also my declaration at the meeting of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference on the 13th of November, 1931, at St. James's Palace, I have to resist your decision with my life. The only way I can do so is by declaring a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind save water with or without salt and soda. This fast will cease if during its progress the British Government, of its own motion or under pressure of public opinion, revise their decision and withdraw their scheme of communal electorates for the Depressed Classes, whose representatives should be elected by the general electorate under the common franchise, no matter how wide it is.

"The fast will come into operation in the ordinary course from the noon of 20th September next, unless the said decision is meanwhile revised in the manner suggested above.

"I am asking the authorities to cable the text of this letter to you as to give you ample notice. But, in any case, I am leaving sufficient time for this letter to reach you in time by the slowest route.

"I also ask that this letter and my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, already referred to, be published at the earliest possible moment. On my part, I have scrupulously observed the rule of the jail and have communicated my desire or the contents of these two letters to no one, save my two companions, Sardar Patel and Mahadev Desai. But I want, if you make it possible, public opinion to be affected by my letters. Hence my request for their early publication.

"I regret the decision I have taken. But as a man of religion that I hold myself to be, I have no other course left open to me. As I have said in my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, even if His Majesty's Government decided to release me in order to save themselves embarrassment, my fast will have to continue. For, I cannot now hope

to resist the decision by any other means. And I have no desire to compass my release by any means other than honourable.

"It may be that my judgement is warped and that I am wholly in error in regarding separate electorates for the Depressed Classes as harmful to them or to Hinduism. If so, I am not likely to be in the right in reference to other parts of my philosophy of life. In that case, my death by fasting will be at once a penance for my error and a lifting of a weight from off those numberless men and women who have childlike faith in my wisdom. Whereas, if my judgement is right, as I have little doubt it is, the contemplated step is but due to the fulfilment of the scheme of life, which I have tried for more than a quarter of a century, apparently not without considerable success."

The Premier's reply to Gandhi's letter was sent on September 8. He regretted that the Government's decision could not be changed except on the conditions laid down in that decision, and he went out of his way to charge Gandhi with inimical intentions towards the interests of the Depressed Classes. "As I understand your attitude," he remarked, "you propose to adopt the extreme course of starving yourself to death, not in order to secure that the Depressed Classes should have joint electorates with the other Hindus, because that is already provided, nor to maintain the unity of the Hindus, which is also provided, but solely to prevent the Depressed Classes, who admittedly suffer from terrible disabilities today, from being able to secure a limited number of representatives of their own choosing to speak on their behalf in the legislatures, which will surely have a dominating influence over their future. . . In response to a very general request from the Indians, after they had failed to produce a settlement themselves, the Government, much against their will, undertook to give a decision on the minorities question. They have now given it, and they cannot be expected to alter it except on the conditions that they have stated. I am afraid, therefore, that my answer to you must be that the Government's decision stands, and that only an agreement of the communities themselves can substitute other electoral arrangements for those that the Government have devised."

Gandhi replied to the Prime Minister's letter briefly, reiterating his adherence to his decision to fast. The letter from Gandhi dated September 9, said:

"I have to thank you for your frank and full letter telegraphed and received this day. I am sorry, however, that you put upon the contemplated step an interpretation that never crossed my mind. I have claimed to speak on behalf of the very class, to sacrifice whose interests you impute to me a desire to fast myself to death. I had hoped that the extreme step itself would effectively prevent any such selfish interpretation. Without arguing, I say that for me this matter is one of pure religion. The mere fact of the Depressed Classes having double votes does not protect them or Hindu society in general from being disrupted. In the establishment of separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, I sense the injection of poison that is calculated to destroy Hinduism and to do no good whatsoever to the Depressed Classes. You will please permit me to say that no matter how sympathetic you may be, you cannot come to any correct decision on a matter of such vital and religious importance to the parties concerned.

"I should not be against even over-representation of the Depressed Classes. What I am against is their statutory separation, even in a limited form, from the Hindu fold, so long as they choose to belong to it. Do you realize that if your decision stands and the constitution comes into being, you arrest the marvellous growth of the work of the Hindu reformers who have dedicated themselves to the uplift of their suppressed brethren in every walk of life?

"I have, therefore, been compelled reluctantly to adhere to the decision conveyed to you.

"As your letter may give rise to some misunderstanding, I wish to state that the fact of my having isolated for special treatment the Depressed Class question from other parts of your decision does not in any way mean that I approve of, or I am reconciled to other parts of the decision. In my opinion, many other parts are open to grave objection. Only, I do not consider them to be any warrant for calling from me such self-immolation as my conscience has now prompted me to in the matter of the Depressed Classes."

The Gandhi-Hoare-MacDonald correspondence was released in Simla on the 12th. The Government's attitude was announced by Mr. Haig, the Home Member, that "no Government could possibly let its action be influenced by methods of this kind." A further announcement was made in the Assembly to the effect that as soon as Gandhi commenced his fast he would be removed from prison

to a suitable place of private residence, where he would be required to remain. Gandhi, however, refused to accept any conditions and asked to be left in jail, whereupon the Government decided to allow him all facilities for private interviews inside the prison and also unrestricted correspondence.

The announcement of Gandhi's decision to "fast unto death" bestirred the people to action, and served as a signal for a country-wide demand for revision of the Premier's decision. A beginning was made by the Depressed Class leader, M. C. Rajah, in a statement on September 13, in which he condemned the Premier's award, and made an appeal for concerted action on the part of all sections to save Gandhi's life. Except for Dr. Ambedkar, who described the fast as a "political stunt", Indian leaders made a supreme effort to avoid the crisis. Sapru demanded Gandhi's immediate release and expressed the hope that Government would take no risks with the life of one "who alone could make a contribution to the solution of the communal problem by mutual agreement". Yakub Hasan warned his co-religionists against any "disrespectful belittling" of the noble sacrifice of Gandhi. "The Hindu society is on its trial," stated Rajendra Prasad, "and if it has any life in it, it must now respond with a great and magnificent act." On September 14, all the temples in Allahabad were thrown open to the members of the Depressed Classes, and this example was followed in several other cities. On September 19, meetings were held all over the country demanding withdrawal of the Premier's decision with regard to the separate electorate for the Depressed Classes. The attention of the world was focused on the frail, old man, sitting in Yeravda prison. Anxious cables started pouring in.

"The fast which I am approaching was resolved upon in the name of God, for His work, and as I believe in all humility, at His call," said Gandhi in a statement dated September 15, which was withheld by the Bombay Government for a week. "Friends have urged me to postpone the date for giving the public a chance to organize itself. I am sorry it is not open to me to change even the hour except for the reason stated in my letter to the Premier." Explaining the import of the fast, he wrote:

"Impending fast is against those who have faith in me, whether Indians or foreigners, and not for those who have it not. Therefore, it is not against the English official world, but is against those

Englishmen and Englishwomen, who, in spite of the contrary teaching of the official world, believe in me and the justice of the cause I represent. Nor is it against those of my countrymen who have no faith in me, whether they be Hindus or others, but it is against those countless Indians, no matter to what persuasion they belong, who believe that I represent a just cause. Above all it is intended to sting Hindu conscience into right religious action.

"There should be no coercion of those who are opposed to joint electorates. I have no difficulty in understanding their bitter opposition. They have every right to distrust me. Do I not belong to the Hindu section miscalled superior class or Caste Hindus, who have ground down to powder the so-called untouchables? The marvel is that they have remained nevertheless in the Hindu fold. There is subtle something quite indefinable in Hinduism which keeps them in it even in spite of themselves. And this that makes it imperative for a man like me, with a living experience of it, to resist the contemplated separation, even though the effort should cost life.

"Fasting for light and penance is a hoary institution. I have observed it both in Christianity and Islam. Hinduism is replete with instances of fasting for purification and penance. But it is a privilege, if it is also a duty. Moreover, to the best of my light, I have reduced it to a science. As an expert, therefore, I would warn my friends and sympathizers against copying me blindly or out of false or hysterical sympathy. Let all such qualify themselves by hard work and selfless service of 'untouchables', and then they would have independent light if their time for fasting has come."

Cry For Justice

1932

The public and the leaders were panicky, but Gandhi remained unruffled. On September 18, 1932, he commenced his twenty-four-hour silence, and wrote a number of letters to the inmates of the Sabarmati ashram asking them not to interrupt their daily routine. "Inscrutable are the ways of Providence," he wrote, "I feel that I am dancing to His tune. And, therefore, I feel light and buoyant in spirit. Do we not in the ashram everyday rehearse the lesson of renouncing attachment to the flesh? Now is the time to prove that we have really assimilated that lesson. Let there not be, therefore, any anxiety or vain sorrow, on my account. Rather, you should all rejoice that it has been given to one of your members to go through the final test. You should wish and pray that He may show me the way to come out of the ordeal successfully. It is easy, comparatively speaking, to take the plunge, but how many swim across and reach the other shore? Whilst, therefore, no one may feel elated before the end, I feel secure in the faith that He in whose name the work was undertaken will also bring it to a successful issue."

On the day of his silence, a deputation consisting of Mathuradas Vasanji, Sir Chunilal Mehta, Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, and Sheth Ghanashyamdas Birla arrived to sound Gandhi on some sort of compromise on a system of joint electorates with the reservation of seats. The interview which had commenced late in the evening, on Sunday, remained unfinished, since it was carried on by Gandhi in writing. On Monday noon, when Gandhi broke his silence, the deputation reappeared to hear his views. He told them that he was opposed to reservation of seats and preferred a scheme which would give the Hindu community an opportunity of giving demonstration of its change of heart and manners towards the Depressed Classes by seeing that their candidates were returned. He also suggested that there should be provision for the allotment of additional seats by

a suitable system that might be agreed upon. He further told them that he would not and could not make reservation of seats an issue in the fast, which would end as soon as the separate electorates were replaced by joint electorates. He, however, took the opportunity of warning the deputation that he would not be satisfied with a mere political agreement between the Caste Hindus and the Depressed Classes, and that he would undertake a similar fast again for the eradication of untouchability, if and when the "inner voice" gave the command.

In the meanwhile a Hindu Leaders' Conference of over hundred delegates met in Bombay on September 19, under the presidentship of Malaviya. Prominent among those who participated in the conference were Sapru, Jayakar, Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, M. C. Rajah, Dr. Ambedkar, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, M. S. Aney, Dr. Moonje, P. Baloo, Kunzru and A. V. Thakkar. The discussion revealed a complete unanimity of opinion on two points: first, that Gandhi's life must be saved at all cost; secondly, that the blot of untouchability must be removed at the earliest moment. Accordingly, a manifesto was drafted the next day, at the instance of Mr. Rajah, to be signed by all present pledging themselves to fight untouchability, till it was completely eradicated. With regard to the constitutional issues, however, as Dr. Ambedkar felt that he could not proceed any further with the discussion till Gandhi's terms were definitely known, the conference was adjourned.

Before the fateful day dawned, Gandhi remembered Tagore and wrote these words to him: "This is early morning, three o'clock of Tuesday. I enter the fiery gate at noon. If you can bless the effort, I want it. You have been to me a true friend, because you have been a candid friend, often speaking your thoughts aloud. If your heart approves of the action, I want your blessing. It will sustain me. I hope I have made myself clear. My love." Before the letter was despatched, a telegram from the poet was handed to him: "It is worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity. Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance with reverence and love."

On Tuesday, September 20, Gandhi said his morning prayer and took his usual breakfast of milk and fruit. From half past six to eight he heard the recitation of the Gita, and at half past eleven he took his last meal consisting of lemon juice and honey with water. The

zero hour approached. "Oh traveller, arise, it is dawn; where is the night that thou still sleepest", a Hindi song, was sung by Gandhi, Mahadev Desai and Vallabhbhai Patel. The jail bell struck twelve and his "tussle with God" commenced.

In the evening, journalists came to see Gandhi, who immediately plunged into the question uppermost in his mind:

"If people won't laugh at me, I would gently put forward a claim which I have always asserted, that I am a 'touchable' by birth, but an 'untouchable' by choice, and I have endeavoured to qualify myself to represent, not the upper ten even among the 'untouchables', because be it said to their shame there are castes and classes among them, but my ambition is to represent and to identify myself with, as far as possible, the lowest strata of 'untouchables', namely the 'invisibles' and the 'unapproachables', whom I have always before my mind's eye, wherever I go; for they have indeed drunk deep of the poisoned cup. I have met them in Malabar and in Orissa, and am convinced that if they are ever to rise, it will not be by reservation of seats, but by the strenuous work of Hindu reformers in their midst, and it is because I feel that this separation would have killed all prospect of reform that my whole soul has rebelled against it; and, let me make it plain, that the withdrawal of separate electorates will satisfy the letter of my vow but will not satisfy the spirit behind it, and in my capacity of being a self-chosen 'untouchable' I am not going to rest content with a patched-up pact between the 'touchables' and the 'untouchables'.

"What I want, what I am living for, and what I should delight in dying for, is the eradication of untouchability root and branch. I want, therefore, a living pact, whose life-giving effect should be felt not in the distant tomorrow, but today, and therefore, that pact should be sealed by an all-India demonstration of the 'touchables' and the 'untouchables' meeting together, not by way of a theatrical show, but in real brotherly embrace. It is to achieve this, the dream of my life for the past fifty years, that I have entered today the fiery gates. The British Government's decision was the last straw. It was a decisive symptom, and with the unerring eye of the physician that I claim to be in such matters, I detected it. Therefore, for me the abolition of separate electorates would be but the beginning of the end, and I would warn all those leaders assembled at Bombay and others against coming to any hasty decision.

"My life I count of no consequence. One hundred lives given for this noble cause would, in my opinion, be poor penance done by the Hindus for the atrocious wrongs that they have heaped upon helpless men and women of their own faith. I would urge them not to swerve an inch from the path of strictest justice. My fast I want to throw in the scales of justice, and if it wakes up Caste Hindus from their slumber, and if they are roused to a sense of duty, it will have served its purpose. Whereas, if out of blind affection for me, they would somehow or other come to a rough and ready agreement so as to secure the abrogation and then go off to sleep, they will commit a grievous blunder and will have made my life a misery. For, while the abrogation of separate electorates would result in my breaking the fast, it would be a living death for me, if the vital pact, for which I am striving, is not arrived at. It would simply mean that, as soon as I call off the fast, I would have to give notice of another in order to achieve the spirit of the vow to the fullest extent.

"This may look childish to the onlooker, but not so to me. If I had anything more to give, I would throw that in also to remove this curse, but I have nothing more than my life.

"I believe that if untouchability is really rooted out, it will not only purge Hinduism of a terrible blot, but its repercussion will be worldwide. My fight against untouchability is a fight against the impure in humanity."

Millions in India offered prayers and fasted on September 20. "A shadow is darkening today over India like a shadow cast by an eclipsed sun," said Tagore in an address delivered to the inmates of Visva Bharati. "Mahatmaji has pronounced his ultimatum, and though it may be our misfortune to lose him in the battlefield, the fight will be passed to every one of us to be carried on to the final end. It is the gift of the fight which he is going to offer to us, and if we do not know how to accept it humbly, yet with proud determination, if we cheaply dismiss it with some ceremonials to which we are accustomed, and allow the noble life to be wasted with its great meaning missed, then our people will passively roll down the slope of degradation to the blankness of utter futility."

On that historic day, the deep-seated prejudices seemed to give way. The Caste Hindus fraternized with the untouchables and mixed freely in thousands of meetings all over the country. The doors of a large number of temples were thrown open to the untouchables

throughout India. "And that some of the great temples should have spontaneously admitted the 'untouchables' without restriction is to me a modern miracle," said Gandhi, in a message to the friends abroad. "They have only now admitted God. Hitherto, the images, which the custodians, falsely and in their pride, thought had God within were godless. The cabinet decision was to me a timely warning from God, that I was asleep when He was knocking at the door and waking me up. The agony of the soul is not going to end until every trace of untouchability is gone. Thank God there is not only one man in this movement but thousands, who will lay down their lives in order to achieve this reform in its fullness."

The Hindu Leaders' Conference on the 20th having adjourned, informal talks began. On the main issue of joint electorates, there was a prolonged discussion. When Dr. Ambedkar was found quite unwilling to give in, Tej Bahadur Sapru suggested the adoption of a system of primary and secondary election for a limited number of seats. He said that the system, while maintaining the principle of joint electorates, would enable the Depressed Classes to choose their own candidates. Dr. Ambedkar and his colleague Dr. Solanki welcomed the proposal, but said that they would demand a much larger number of total seats than the Prime Minister's award had given them.

Sapru, Jayakar, Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, G. D. Birla and Devadas left by the midnight train reaching Poona at seven in the morning of September 21. The meeting took place in the office room of the Yeravda Jail. Sitting at the centre of the table, Gandhi said, "I preside." Sapru placed his proposal before Dr. Ambedkar and the others present put in a few words of support. At the end of twenty minutes' discussion Gandhi said: "I am prepared to consider your plan favourably. The idea of the panel does not disturb me. But I should like to have the whole picture before me in writing. Before I make up my mind I must see, if possible, Dr. Ambedkar and M. C. Rajah. I may see my way much clearer, when I have known their minds."

The mental strain and frequent walks from his cell to the jail office for the interviews had tired out Gandhi. To avoid any further strain, he was removed to a special segregated yard. There under the shadow of a mango tree, on a hospital cot, he remained for the greater part of the day, surrounded by chairs for visitors. Near his

head was placed a small table, for keeping his books, papers, and bottles of boiled water. At short intervals he used to help himself to the water, adding some soda and salt. Sardar Patel and Mahadev Desai were constantly by his side and Mrs. Naidu had been specially brought from the women's jail yard to give him company.

On September 22, at four in the morning, Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Prasad received a very urgent telephone call from Yeravda. Gandhi wanted to tell them his reaction to the Sapru scheme submitted to him in writing. "There is a serious flaw in this," he began saying, "I don't like it. This will again divide the untouchables into two separate groups. There will be the panel group in the legislatures, and the other group which will come in by direct election. There will always be a glamour about the panel seats, which will result in the creation of a superiority and inferiority complex among the Depressed Classes. I cannot be a party to that."

Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Prasad could not refute his argument and they stood dumbfounded. "I cannot possibly swallow part two," Gandhi continued. "All the claims made in it must be met, but it cannot go into the constitution." Part two demanded, among many other things, that the Depressed Classes should be allowed representation in the municipalities, local boards, district, taluk and village unions on population basis, and that in the public services central and provincial, they should be guaranteed appointments, according to their population ratio as a minimum. "You have got to tell me," he said, "whether the system of primary elections is an evil. If it is, then we can have nothing to do with it. But, on the other hand, if you are prepared to tolerate it for a certain number of seats, I would ask you to consider why it should not be extended to the whole of the seats. It is to tell you this that I sent an urgent message asking you to see me. You have now got to decide for me. If you think that we cannot extend the panel system to all seats, then I feel that we should not tolerate it for a certain number of seats either. But discuss that among yourselves and tell me how you feel about it finally." The interview closed there.

Gandhi repeated to other leaders what he had earlier said in the day to Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Prasad. Rajah and P. Baloo arrived from Bombay to assure him that they would leave no stone unturned to secure an agreement. They told him that they were in favour of the proposed system of primary election, but they pointed

out that it was necessary to take more effective measures to place the Depressed Classes on an equal footing with the Caste Hindus. Gandhi, in his turn, assured them of his firm determination to see it through.

On Thursday afternoon, when Dr. Ambedkar and Dr. Solanki saw him, they were accompanied by most of the leaders then present in Poona. "Mahatmaji, you have been very unfair to us," began Dr. Ambedkar. "It is always my lot to appear to be unfair," he remarked, "I cannot help it." The interview was protracted and Dr. Ambedkar did most of the talking, while Gandhi lay weak and still, in his bed. "I want my compensation," Dr. Ambedkar urged repeatedly. "I am with you in most of the things you say," assured Gandhi. "But you say you are interested in my life."

Dr. Ambedkar: "Yes, Mahatmaji, I am. And if you devoted yourself entirely to the welfare of the Depressed Classes, you would then become our hero."

Gandhi: "Well, if you are interested in my life, you know what you have got to do to save that life. Your position, from what you tell me, is like this. You want adequate price and compensation before you can agree to forgo what you have already secured under the Premier's decision. You say that the double system of voting proposed by you gives sufficient scope to the other party to rise, while the seats to be filled under the panel system are designed to satisfy the aspirations of your group. What worries me, however, is this. Why do you propose the panel system only for some seats? Why do you not propose it for all the seats? If the panel system is good for one section, it should be good even for the whole of the Depressed Classes. That is how I regard the question. You are 'untouchable' by birth, but I am now going to make, what might appear as an astounding claim for a man in my position. I am an 'untouchable' by adoption, and as such more of an 'untouchable' in mind than you. Any scheme that is really good should subserve the interests not of this group or of that, but of the Depressed Class as a whole. That is the criterion by which I judge this scheme. My first suggestion to you is that, if the panel system is good for any section of the Depressed Classes, it should be extended to all the Depressed Class seats. I cannot stand the idea that your community should either in theory or in practice be separated from me. We must be one and indivisible. As I have told the other friends, I feel

no difficulty in accepting your scheme of electing a panel of candidates. But I do not want to let you have the panel for a few seats. I want to make a present of it to you for all the seats. I confess I do not like the scheme as it stands. It will divide your community, and I would give my life to prevent that, just as I am giving my life to prevent the disruption of the whole Hindu community."

Dr. Ambedkar's attitude now changed: "I have made my concession by accepting joint electorates. Your offer to accept primary elections for all the seats is very kind."

"Yes, that is my offer," said Gandhi, "but, now, do not let the panel consist of two. It does not give me sufficient space to turn in. You must make it five. And then there are many other points, which you must settle with these friends."

Thursday's talks completely exhausted him. His physical weakness grew with every hour, and from the 22nd onwards he had to be removed from one place to another on a stretcher to conserve his energy. The Government were nervous, and they immediately transferred Kasturbai from the Sabarmati jail to Yeravda and permitted her to remain by Gandhi's side.

On Friday morning, September 23, a small conference of about twenty-five leaders commenced its work seriously at the residence of Malaviya. Gandhi's suggestion that the panel system should be extended to all the seats was unanimously accepted and the number of the candidates to constitute the panel was fixed at four. The next problem was that of the total number of seats for the Depressed Classes. The Prime Minister's decision awarded 71 seats, while Dr. Ambedkar's demand was for 197 seats. It was contended that the number of seats to be fixed should be based on the proportion of the Depressed Class population to the total Hindu population, and finally the total number allotted was 147 seats. Representation in the Central Legislature was taken up next and it was agreed that 18 per cent of the seats allotted to the general electorate for British India be reserved for the Depressed Classes.

Dr. Ambedkar, supported by his colleagues, fought every inch of ground. It was already four but the negotiations still continued and an atmosphere of uncertainty prevailed. The question of fixing the time-limit at the end of which the special provisions were to expire was now on the agenda. Dr. Ambedkar's scheme provided that the system of primary elections should terminate automatically at the

expiry of a period of ten years, but the question of reserved seats was to be decided by a referendum of the Depressed Classes at the end of a further period of fifteen years. Strong opinions were held on both sides on the question of the referendum, and the discussion continued till it was nightfall.

News came in at this stage that Gandhi's condition had taken a definite turn for the worse. Devadas who had paid a hurried visit to the jail made a strong personal appeal to Dr. Ambedkar not to hold up an agreement by pressing for a referendum. Dr. Ambedkar and his colleagues were not prepared to give in, and they charged some of the members assembled with attempting to deprive them of something which they believed that Gandhi himself would readily grant. Members of the conference now decided to shift the scene to Yeravda prison.

Gandhi's patience had been taxed to the utmost. The leaders were to see him at four with an agreed settlement, but it was nine when they arrived. "Mahatmaji, you must come to our rescue," said Dr. Ambedkar. "Some of these friends are opposing our demand for a referendum at the end of the stated period. We are very keen on having it, because we feel that it will do more to remove untouchability than anything else, and we expect you to support our claim." Gandhi liked the idea of putting the Caste Hindus on trial. He asked Dr. Ambedkar why the referendum should not be taken immediately or in the near future. He suggested that if a period of one year was not considered suitable, then they might make it five years. And, if the verdict of the referendum at the end of one year or five years was in favour of retaining the reserved seats, they would get a further lease of life, and there should be a referendum at the end of ten years. The process could be repeated every ten years. Almost before Gandhi had finished, the physicians stepped in and would not allow any further conversation.

The negotiations were restarted on Saturday morning but the discussion on the question of referendum again came to a standstill. Dr. Ambedkar decided to meet Gandhi once more. It was midday when he, accompanied by Rajagopalachari and Dr. Solanki, reached the jail. Dr. Ambedkar desired Gandhi to agree to a referendum of ten years. Gandhi was slightly better and he spoke very slowly but deliberately. "Your logic is irrefutable," he said. "But let the referendum be at the end of five years. Surely, five years is a sufficient

period to prove the bona fides of the Caste Hindus. But if you insist on postponing the referendum further, I would begin to suspect that what you want is not to test the bona fides of the Caste Hindus but time only to organize the Depressed Classes for an adverse referendum." He made an impassioned appeal for mutual trust, confidence, and goodwill. He described how from the age of twelve, his whole being had rebelled against the very idea of regarding any fellow human being as untouchable and how since then he had led a ceaseless crusade against the evil. "You have a perfect right to demand cent per cent security by the statutory safeguards," he told Dr. Ambedkar. "But, from my fiery bed, I beg of you not to insist upon the right. I am here today to ask for a reprieve for my Caste Hindu brethren. Thank God, their conscience has been roused. If you proceed to wrest from them cent per cent security by the statutory means, then it will interrupt the process of heart-cleansing and self-purification that is fast taking place among them. The particular injustice, for a while, to the untouchables might be checked, but the taint in Hinduism would remain. After all, untouchability is but a symptom of that deep-seated taint. And, if Hinduism is not completely purged of it, it will assert itself again and again in various ways and continue to poison our entire social and political fabric. I entreat you, therefore, not to deprive Hinduism of a last chance to make a voluntary expiation for its sinful past. Give me the chance of working among the Caste Hindus. That is but fair. But if you ask for ten or fifteen years, then it is no chance at all. Hindus must give a good account of themselves within five years or not at all. For me, therefore, the five-year limit of referendum is an absolute matter of conscience. There should be a referendum, but not at the end of any period longer than five years. Tell your friends that I am adamant on this point. I may be a despicable person, but when Truth speaks through me I am invincible." With a tone of finality he said: "There you are. Five years or my life."

He was utterly exhausted as he finished his talk. Dr. Ambedkar tried to say something in support of a ten-year period but without the usual vehemence. On returning from the jail, he assembled his group and after a prolonged discussion announced that he was not able to agree to anything less than ten years. But at last the leaders found a way out. It was about three, when Rajagopalachari went to the jail to break the news of agreement. "I have done it on my

responsibility," he said, "taking that you cannot but agree. We all have agreed to leave the whole question to be decided by mutual agreement in the future. Dr. Ambedkar and all his colleagues have accepted this solution. It bars nothing, while making it possible to do without a referendum entirely. It would depend on the future course of events." Gandhi listened to it carefully and expressed himself only in one word, "excellent".

Rajagopalachari went back to the conference and the Yeravda pact was then formally drafted and the signatures were affixed to it. On the fifth day of the fast, September 24, a complete agreement was reached. Both the wings of the Depressed Classes—one owning allegiance to Dr. Ambedkar and the other to M. C. Rajah—were willing parties to it. The Caste Hindus were parties to it through the assent and signature of Malaviya. Prominent liberal leaders, by their signatures, gave the pact their full support. Gandhi did not formally sign it himself, although practically all the Congressmen present on the spot signed it.

By the next morning train most of the leaders left for Bombay, where the full conference, with Pandit Malaviya in the chair, met on September 25 and ratified the agreement arrived at Poona. The conference further urged that "immediate action must be taken by the Government so as to enable Mahatma Gandhi to break his fast within the terms of his vow and before it becomes too late."

In conclusion, the resolution drafted by Gandhi was accepted: "This conference resolves that henceforth, amongst Hindus, no one shall be regarded as an untouchable by reason of his birth and those who have been so regarded hitherto will have the same right as other Hindus in regard to the use of public wells, public schools, public roads and all other public institutions. This right will have statutory recognition at the first opportunity and shall be one of the earliest acts of the swaraj parliament, if it shall not have received such recognition before to secure, by every legitimate and peaceful means, an early removal of all social disabilities now imposed by custom upon the so-called untouchable classes, including the bar in respect of admission to temples."

Soon after the agreement Gandhi sent a cable to C. F. Andrews in London, stating that he would break his fast, if the cabinet accepted the settlement *in toto*. Urgent telegrams had been sent by Sapru, Dr. Ambedkar, Rajah and Malaviya appealing to the

Premier to lose no time in taking the necessary step. On receiving the cabled messages about the Yeravda pact, Ramsay MacDonald, who had gone to Sussex to attend a funeral, hurried down to London, where he was joined by Sir Samuel Hoare. After prolonged deliberations extending to midnight, the cabinet members finally agreed upon the terms of the statement announcing the substitution of the Government's decision by corresponding provisions of the Yeravda pact. Simultaneous statements on behalf of the cabinet were issued both in England and in India on the morning of 26th.

The people now were anxious as to when Gandhi would break his fast. Anxiety rose to a pitch, when on the morning of 26th the doctors issued an alarming health bulletin, saying that Gandhi's condition had entered into the danger zone. "His vitality is decidedly lower than it was yesterday and it is lowest since he commenced his fast," they announced. "There is now danger, even if the fast is broken."

Tagore, who had dashed to Poona from Calcutta, visited Gandhi at noon. Without a word, he approached Gandhi, leaned towards him, overcome with emotion. The poet exclaimed: "I have come floating on the tide of good news. I am glad that I have come and that I have come in time." He then left Gandhi's bed-side as the strain of conversation was proving too much for Gandhi. At four, Col. Doyle, the inspector-general of prisons, came with the long-awaited document which he handed over to Gandhi. Gandhi, after going through the document carefully, passed it on to the leaders present with the remark, "I think it should go to the Depressed Class leaders." The position that he took up was that Dr. Ambedkar and others having accepted the settlement as an integral whole, he was bound to stand by it *in toto*. It was a question of honour with him. "It means holding another conference," the leaders protested. "Then a conference it must be," replied Gandhi. Kunzru then came to the rescue. "Having studied the document closely," he said, "I can assure you that it contains as complete an acceptance of the Yeravda pact as could be expected from any Government. It fully endorses all those clauses that have a bearing on the Premier's decision, while the other clauses that fall outside that decision are not repudiated but are expressly recognized. In other words, it totally replaces the Premier's decision, by corresponding provisions of the Yeravda pact. Besides, it was clearly understood at the conference

that the Depressed Class leaders themselves did not expect the part relating to the guarantees about their special interests to form a part of the constitution. The form of the communique must have been determined by the exigencies of constitutional procedure. Sir Tej Bahadur agrees with me that even we, who are co-operating with you in this matter and are anxious to save your life, even we, had we been in the Government's position, could not have issued a different communique."

Gandhi at last gave in. Calling Col. Doyle near him, he said: "I have decided to break my fast. I had my misgivings, but in the face of the unanimous opinion of these friends, I do not want to take upon me the responsibility of prolonging it. But before I break my fast I want to make one thing clear. If after I break my fast all the old restrictions are reimposed on me, it will interrupt the work of reform that has been begun. I would, therefore, expect all facilities necessary for carrying on of my untouchability work to continue, if I am to remain here." Col. Doyle promised to convey the message to the Government and entreated Gandhi to break his fast without further delay.

A unique ceremony, the like of which had never been witnessed in any jail, was held at 5.15 p.m., Monday, September 26, in the Yeravda prison. Gandhi lay on his cot surrounded by about two hundred people and Tagore led the prayer by singing a Bengali song from *Gitanjali*: "When the heart is dried and parched up, come with your shower of mercy." This was followed by a recitation of Sanskrit verses and then was sung, all joining, his favourite hymn, "Vaishnava jana". When it was finished, Kasturbai handed him the orange juice, and the fast terminated.

Gandhi dictated a statement to the press reminding the people that the breaking of the fast carried with it a sure promise of its resumption if the reform was not relentlessly pursued and achieved within a measurable period. "I had thought," the statement ran, "of laying down a period, but I feel that I may not do so without a definite call from within. The message of freedom shall penetrate every 'untouchable' home, and that can only happen if the reformers cover every village." He further expressed the hope that the almost ideal solution that had been reached on the question of Depressed Class representation would pave the way for the larger unity between the various communities and mark the dawn of a new era

of mutual trust and the recognition of the fundamental unity of all communities. "I am the same to the Musalman today that I was in 1920-2. And I should be just as prepared to lay down my life as I was in Delhi to achieve organic unity and permanent peace between them and the Hindus, and I hope and pray that there will be, as a result of this great upheaval, a spontaneous move in this direction, and then, certainly, the other communities can no more stand out."

In conclusion he said: "The terms of the decision sent to me I have not approached without misgivings. It accepts, I suppose, very naturally, only that part of the agreement that refers to the British Cabinet's communal decision. I expect that it had constitutional difficulty in announcing its acceptance of the whole agreement now, but I would like to assure my Harijan friends, as I would like henceforth to name them, that so far as I am concerned, I am wedded to the whole of the agreement and that they may hold my life as a hostage for its due fulfilment unless we ourselves arrive at any other better settlement of our own free will."

By a happy coincidence, on September 27, fell the sixty-fourth birthday of Gandhi, according to the Indian calendar. The gloom and the feeling of anxiety gave way to an outburst of rejoicing and fresh determination. "Mahatmaji's birthday," observed Tagore in a speech delivered in Poona, "appears today before us in an awful majesty of Death which has just left him victorious. It is our great good fortune today, that such a man has come to us, and what is still rarer, that we have not repudiated him, as we have so often done with the messengers of Freedom and Truth. His inspiration is actively at work all through India and beyond its boundaries. It has awakened our consciousness to a truth which goes far beyond the limits of our self-interest. His life itself is a constant call to us to emancipation in service and self-dedication."

"Let us prove worthy of the call and accept from Mahatmaji's hand the responsibility which he has accepted for himself," the poet poignantly observed. "We know, that, in the Upanishads, the God who ever dwells in the hearts of all men has been mentioned as Mahatma. The epithet is rightly given to the man of God whom we are honouring today, for his dwelling is not within a narrow enclosure of individual consciousness. His dwelling is in the heart of the untold multitude who are born today in India and who are yet

to come, and this greatness of his soul, which has power to comprehend other souls, has made possible what never has happened in our history, when even the masses have been roused to the great fact that India is not merely a geographical entity but is a living truth in which they live and move and have their being.

"Today in our determined effort, let us all join Mahatmaji in his noble task of removing the burden of the ages, the burden of disrespect upon the bent back of those who have been stigmatized for the accident of their birth, and the sinful denial, to a large body of our countrymen, of sympathy which is the birthright of all human beings. We are not only casting off the chain of India's moral enslavement but indicating the path for all humanity. We are challenging the victimization, wherever and in whatever form it exists, to stand the test of relentless questioning of conscience which Mahatmaji has brought to bear upon our day."

Throughout India, Untouchability Abolition Week was observed from September 27 to October 2. In public meetings the pact was explained and appeals were made to abolish untouchability. Intercaste dinners were held in all the cities, and temples and wells were thrown open to the untouchables. An appeal for a living bond with the Harijans and for the establishment of larger unity that Gandhi made in his statement, after breaking his fast, had a magic effect. An All-India Anti-untouchability League with a network of provincial boards was set up. Its headquarters at Delhi had an able secretary in Amritlal V. Thakkar. An appeal for twenty-five lakhs of rupees had been made and money was pouring in. The Nawab of Bhopal expressed his sympathy with the objects of the reform by announcing a donation of Rs. 5,000 to the anti-untouchability movement. A manifesto had also been issued over the signatures of some thirty-seven prominent Christians, advocating joint electorates for the Christians on moral and nationalist grounds. A similar move had been set on foot to find a solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem in the wake of Yeravda agreement. Shaukat Ali, in recognition of the new spirit that was in the air, sent a cordial telegram to Gandhi, his "old chief", invoking his blessings on the efforts which he with Dr. Syed Mahamud and Maulana Azad, was making to achieve unity among the Hindus and Muslims. He had gone further and requested the Viceroy to release Gandhi, in order to enable him to tackle the problem himself.

The people expected a change of heart on the part of Government. Gandhi in his turn expressed his desire for co-operation, on September 27: "No one would be more delighted than I would be to endorse any worthy suggestion for co-operation by the Congress with Government and with the Round Table Conference. I would only emphasize and underline the adjective worthy. In spite of my repeated declarations it is not generally recognized that, by instinct, I am a co-operator."

All the expectations, however, were shattered when suddenly, on September 29, all special facilities in respect of interviews and correspondence that had been extended to Gandhi were withdrawn. Jayakar, who was to see Gandhi by appointment, was told that he had come too late. The heavy doors of the Yeravda prison were once more closed.

Soul's Agony

1932–1933

CIVIL disobedience movement continued at a low ebb during the last quarter of 1932. The fast roused mass consciousness, directing public attention to the field of social reform. Explaining the reduction of the Congress prisoners from 17,000 in November to 14,000 in December, Sir Samuel Hoare said in the House of Commons: "The interest of many Congress workers has now been diverted to Mr. Gandhi's campaign against untouchability."

The leaders agitated for Gandhi's release through the councils and the press. It was urged that his release would enable him to throw himself into the anti-untouchability campaign in person and would also assist the unity conversations that were in progress. The Government remained adamant and the Home Member stated in the Assembly that Gandhi was detained in jail, on account of civil disobedience which was still his avowed programme. As to Gandhi's intervention in the communal discussions, the Government's policy was that whereas the untouchability issue was essentially a moral and religious one, the Hindu-Muslim question was primarily political and thus could not be accepted as a reason for his release.

After a lengthy correspondence between Gandhi and the Government, the privileges to carry on his work on behalf of the untouchables were restored in November 1932. He availed himself of this opportunity to pour out his soul's agony in a series of statements calling upon the Caste Hindus to abolish untouchability. "I have addressed this appeal to you, which proceeds out of my soul's agony. I ask you to share that agony and shame with me and co-operate with me."

In his preliminary statement dated November 4, Gandhi confined himself to the salient questions only, over which there was a heated controversy. He first dealt with the question of the possibility of his resuming the fast:

"Some correspondents contend that the fast savours of coercion and should not have been undertaken at all, and that, therefore, it should never be resumed. Some others have argued that there is no warrant in Hindu religion, or any religion, for a fast like mine. Suffice it to say that it was at God's call that I embarked upon the last fast, and it would be at His call that it would be resumed, if it ever is. But when it was undertaken, it was undoubtedly for the removal of untouchability, root and branch. That it took the form it did was no choice of mine. The cabinet's decision precipitated the crisis of my life, but I knew that the revocation of the British Cabinet's decision was to be but the beginning of the end."

"The Government are now out of it," he said. "Their part of the obligation they have fulfilled promptly. The major part of the resolutions of the Yeravda pact has to be fulfilled by these millions, the so-called Caste Hindus, who have flocked to the meetings. It is they who have to embrace the suppressed brethren and sisters as their own, whom they have to invite to their temples, their homes and their schools. The 'untouchables' in the villages should be made to feel that their shackles have been broken, that they are in no way inferior to their fellow villagers, that they are worshippers of the same God as other villagers and are entitled to the same rights and privileges that the latter enjoy. But if these vital conditions of the pact are not carried out by Caste Hindus, could I possibly live to face God and man?"

"The fast, if it has to come," he observed, "will not be for the coercion of those who are opponents of the reform, but it will be intended to sting into action those who have been my comrades or who have taken pledges for the removal of untouchability. The fast will be resumed in obedience to the inner voice, and only if there is a manifest breakdown of the Yeravda pact, owing to the criminal neglect of Caste Hindus to implement its conditions. Such neglect would mean a betrayal of Hinduism. I should not care to remain its living witness."

"There is another fast which is a near possibility," he said, "and that is in connection with the opening of the Guruvayur temple in Kerala. It was at my urgent request that Kelappan suspended his fast for three months, a fast that had wellnigh brought him to death's door. I would be in honour bound to fast with him, if on or before the 1st of January next that temple is not opened to the

'untouchables' precisely on the same terms as the 'touchables', and if it becomes necessary for Kelappan to resume his fast."

He, however, cautioned the hasty reformers on the question of inter-dining and intermarriage, which, in his opinion, were not part of the movement against untouchability. "They touch the caste men equally with the outcastes. I should never dream of making this reform, howsoever desirable in itself it may be, part of an all-India reform which has been long overdue. Untouchability, in the form we all know it, is a canker eating into the very vitals of Hinduism. Dining and marriage restrictions stunt Hindu society. I think the distinction is fundamental. It would be unwise in a hurricane campaign to overweigh and thus endanger the main issue. It may even amount to a breach of faith with the masses to call upon them suddenly to view the removal of untouchability in a light different from what they have been taught to believe it to be. On the one hand, whilst inter-dining may go on where the public is itself ready for it, it should not be part of the India-wide campaign."

Orthodox Hindus, for whom untouchability was the essence of Hinduism, regarded Gandhi as a renegade. They quoted scriptures in their defence and said that he had imbibed notions against untouchability and the like from Christianity and Islam. "I claim myself to be a sanatanist," he said. "Their definition of a sanatanist is obviously different from mine. For me, the Sanatana Dharma is the vital faith handed down from generations belonging even to the pre-historic period and based upon the Vedas and the writings that followed them. For me, the Vedas are as indefinable as God and Hinduism. It would be partially true to say that the Vedas are the four books which one finds in print. These books themselves are remnants of the discourses left by unknown seers. Those of later generations added to these original treasures according to their own lights. Then arose a great and lofty-minded man, the composer of the Gita. He gave to the Hindu world a synthesis of Hindu religion, at once deeply philosophical and yet easily to be understood by any unsophisticated seeker. It is the one open book to every Hindu who will care to study it, and if all the other scriptures were reduced to ashes, the seven hundred verses of this imperishable book are quite enough to tell one what Hinduism is and how one can live up to it. And I claim to be a sanatanist, because for forty years I have been seeking literally to live up to the teachings of that book. Whatever

is contrary to its main theme, I reject as un-Hindu. It excludes no faith and no teacher. It gives me great joy to be able to say that I have studied the Bible, the Koran, the Zend-Avesta and the other scriptures of the world with the same reverence that I have given to the Gita. They have broadened my outlook and my Hinduism. Lives of Zoroaster, Jesus and Mahomed as I have understood them have illumined many a passage in the Gita. What, therefore, the sanatanist friends have hurled against me as a taunt has been to me a source of consolation. I take pride in calling myself a Hindu, because I find the term broad enough not merely to tolerate but to assimilate the teachings of prophets from all the corners of the earth. I find no warrant for untouchability in this Book of Life. On the contrary it compels me, by an appeal to my reason and a more penetrating appeal to my heart, in language that has a magnetic touch about it, to believe that all life is one and that it is through God and must return to Him. According to the Sanatana Dharma taught by that venerable Mother, life does not consist in outward rites and ceremonial but in the uttermost inward purification and merging oneself, body, soul and mind, in the divine essence. I have gone to the masses in their millions with this message of the Gita burnt into my life, and they have listened to me, not for any political wisdom or for eloquence, but because they have instinctively recognized me as one of them, as one belonging to their faith. As days have gone by, my belief has grown stronger and that I could not be wrong in claiming to belong to the Sanatana Dharma, and if God wills it, He will let me seal that claim with my death."

In his second statement issued the next day, he dealt with the critics who suggested that before Harijans were put on a level with the Caste Hindus, they should become fit for such reception: "These critics forget, that the Caste Hindus are responsible for whatever bad habits are to be observed amongst the Harijans. The so-called higher castes have deprived them of facilities for keeping themselves clean and also the incentive for doing so. As for the occupations of scavenging and tanning, they are no more dirty than many other occupations I can name. What may be admitted is that these occupations, like several others, are carried on in a dirty manner. That is due to the high-handed indifference and criminal neglect of the 'high castes'. I can say from experience that both scavenging and tanning can be made in a perfectly healthy and clean manner."

He added: "Every mother is a scavenger in regard to her own children, and every student of modern medicine is a tanner inasmuch as he has to dissect and skin human carcasses. But we regard theirs to be sacred occupations. I submit that the scavenger's and the tanner's occupations are no less sacred and no less useful than those of mothers and medical men. We shall go wrong, if the Caste Hindus consider themselves as patrons distributing favours to the Harijans. Whatever is done now by the Caste Hindus for Harijans will be but a tardy reparation for all the wrongs done to them for generations, and if now they have to be received in their existing state, as they must be, it is a well-deserved punishment for the past guilt. But still there is this certain satisfaction that the very act of receiving them with open hearts would be a sufficient incentive to cleanliness, and the Caste Hindus will for their own comfort and convenience provide Harijans with facilities for keeping themselves clean."

He pricked the conscience of the Hindus by reminding them of the wrongs they had heaped upon the heads of the untouchables: "Socially they are lepers. Economically they are worse. Religiously they are denied entrances to places we miscall houses of God. They are denied the use, on the same terms as the Caste Hindus, of public roads, public schools, public hospitals, public wells, public taps, public parks, and the like. In some cases, their approach within a measured distance is a social crime, and in some other rare cases their very sight is an offence. They are relegated for their residence to the worst quarters of cities and villages where they get no social services. Caste Hindu lawyers and doctors will not serve them as they do the other members of society. Brahmins will not officiate at their religious functions. The wonder is that they are at all able to eke out an existence or that they still remain within the Hindu fold. They are too downtrodden to rise in revolt against their suppressors. I have recalled these tragic and shameful facts in order to make the workers vividly realize the implications of the Yeravda pact. It is only ceaseless effort that can raise these downtrodden fellow beings from degradation, purify Hinduism, and raise the whole Hindu society and with it the whole of India."

In conclusion he said: "We are too near the scene of tragedy to realize that this canker of untouchability has travelled far beyond its prescribed limits and has sapped the very foundations of the whole

nation. The touch-me-not spirit pervades the atmosphere. If this white ant is touched at its source, I feel certain that we shall soon forget the differences with regard to caste and caste, and religion and religion, and begin to believe that even as all Hindus are one and indivisible, so are Hindus, Musalmans, Sikhs, Parsis, Jews and Christians, branches of the same parent tree. Though religions are many, Religion is one. That is the lesson I would have us learn from the campaign against untouchability. And we will learn it, if we prosecute it in the religious spirit and with a determination that will not be resisted."

The primary plank of the campaign against untouchability was temple entry and Gandhi supported it by declaring his intention to undertake a fast with Kelappan over the question of Guruvayur temple. In Dr. Ambedkar's opinion temple entry was not worth risking one's life, but Gandhi thought otherwise: "Nothing will strike the imagination of Hindu mass mind, including the Harijans, as the throwing open of the public temples to them precisely on the same terms as to Caste Hindus. I can understand Dr. Ambedkar's comparative indifference, but I am not thinking of the few cultured men belonging to the Depressed Classes. I am thinking of the uncultured dumb many. After all, temples play a most important part in the life of the masses, and I, who have been trying all my life to identify myself with the illiterate and the downtrodden, cannot be satisfied until all the temples are open to the outcastes of Hindu humanity. This does not mean that I belittle in any shape or form other disabilities under which they are now belabouring. I feel about them just as keenly as Dr. Ambedkar. Only I feel that the evil is so deep-rooted that one must not make a choice between different disabilities, but must tackle them all at once."

"The Guruvayur temple has come in my way by accident," he said. "But there is something more than the life of a comrade or my personal honour involved in this question. Every one recognizes that the Depressed Classes question has to be solved now or never. There are many thousands of people like me who cling to Hinduism because they believe that there is in it the amplest scope for mental, moral and spiritual expansion. This bar sinister, put upon nearly forty million human beings, is a standing demonstration against that claim. Men like me feel that untouchability is no integral part of Hinduism, it is an excrescence. But if it is found to be otherwise,

if the Hindu mass mind really hugs untouchability, reformers like me have no other option but to sacrifice ourselves on the altar of our convictions.

"I have patiently and silently listened to the taunt that such a fast is tantamount to suicide. But, I do not consider it to be such. On the other hand, for men with deep religious conviction there is no other outlet for the soul than this final sacrifice, when every other effort appears to be perfectly hopeless. This campaign, therefore, in my opinion, is the acid test of what I have claimed for Hinduism. Hinduism dies if untouchability lives, and untouchability has to die if Hinduism is to live."

A correspondent complained that in the heat of enthusiasm the reformers were harsh in words and actions towards the orthodox and the campaign was not being kept within bounds. Gandhi gave publicity to this complaint in his third statement of November 7, and sternly warned against intolerance. "There can be no compulsion, I should say, in any matter. Let those in charge of the movement, therefore, understand that even in their impatience to save me from the prospective fast they may not force the pace by adopting questionable methods. And if they do so, they will merely hasten my end. It would be a living death for me to witness the degeneration of a movement in whose behalf, as I believe, God has prompted that little fast. The cause of Harijans and Hinduism will not be served by the methods of the rabble. This is perhaps the biggest religious reform movement in India, if not in the world, involving as it does the well-being of nearly forty million human beings living in serfdom. The orthodox section, that disapproves of it, is entitled to every courtesy and consideration. We have to win them over by love, by self-sacrifice ,by perfect self-restraint, and by letting the purity of our lives produce its silent effect upon their hearts. We must have faith in our truth and love, converting the opponents to our way.

"I would, therefore, respectfully urge those who do not appreciate the purely religious character of the movement to retire from it. Let those who have that faith and fervour, be they few or many, work the movement. The removal of untouchability may produce, indeed it will produce great political consequences, but it is not a political movement. It is a movement purely and simply of purification of Hinduism. And that purification can come through the purest instruments only. Thanks be to God that there are hundreds, if not

thousands, of such instruments working in all parts of India. Let the impatient sceptics watch, wait and see. But let them not mar the movement by hasty, ill-conceived interference, even though it may be prompted by laudable motives."

A correspondent criticized Gandhi's statements and said that the Yeravda pact came into being only because of people's adoration of his personality. The critic considered the pact "a public misfortune" and maintained that many looked upon it with disfavour in secret. This was the first and only complaint of its kind but Gandhi made it a point to reply to it in his fourth statement: "If the information given by my correspondent turns out to be true, I would hold my fast to be doubly justified. Life in the midst of such falsity would be a burden to me. The sooner public men and the public realize the necessity of resisting and asserting themselves against so-called mahatmas like myself, the better it would be for themselves, for the country, and for men like me. I should gladly fast, even to have such a cleansing of the atmosphere. I can repeat with all the emphasis at my command that my fast is not intended to coerce anyone to act against what he may consider to be the best interest of society or the country."

Sitting in Yeravda Jail, Gandhi patiently argued with the critics and directed his campaign through the Anti-Untouchability League, later called the Servants of the Untouchables Society. In the fifth statement dated November 14, Gandhi dwelt upon the task of the Harijan workers to carry on the internal reform and chalked out for them a practical programme: promotion of cleanliness and hygiene among the Harijans; the improved methods of carrying on what are known as unclean occupations—scavenging and tanning; giving up carrion and beef, if not meat altogether; giving up of intoxicating liquors; inducing parents to send their children to day-schools and parents themselves to attend the night-schools wherever such are opened; abolition of untouchability among themselves.

In the sixth statement, he wrote: "Caste Hindus can effectively supplement the effort of the Harijan workers in inculcating habits of cleanliness by procuring facilities for having an easy access to the required water supply. And they can find out public wells and tanks situated near the Harijan quarters, and canvass the opinion of Caste Hindus who may be using such wells or tanks, pointing out to them that Harijans have legal right to the use of all such public services.

And they can at the same time see to this, that when the consent of the Caste Hindus has been secured for the use by Harijans of these services, the latter use them in a manner not offensive to the former. As to scavenging, they can visit the owners of houses served by Harijans in their neighbourhood and explain to them the necessity of making it easier for Harijans to do the cleaning work in a hygienic manner. To this end, it would be naturally necessary for them to study the scientific method of constructing closets and disposing of night soil. The workers can also procure from the householders special dresses to be supplied to the scavengers, and make Harijans feel by unhesitatingly doing the scavenging themselves that there is nothing low or nothing undignified about rendering such service. And such workers should also carry on propaganda against the Caste Hindus giving to their scavengers leavings from their daily food and, where they are ill-paid, persuading the employers to pay them a decent wage.

"As to tanning, not much help can be rendered unless someone of such voluntary leisure-time workers has humanity and enthusiasm enough to study the hygienic method of skinning the carcasses and, having done so, to spread the knowledge so obtained among these tanners. But, they certainly can do one thing. They can find out the custom about the disposal of such carcasses and see that the tanners are assured of a proper wage for the service they render. Those who have the capacity and time can conduct day or night schools, take Harijan children for picnics and sightseeing on holidays, or whenever the opportunity occurs, visit Harijans in their own homes, procure medical aid where necessary, and generally let them feel that a new page has been opened in their lives and that they need no longer regard themselves as the neglected and despised portion of Hindu humanity."

The contemplated fast was intended "to strengthen the weak, to energize the sluggards, to give faith to the sceptics". An orthodox could use the same weapon against Gandhi and his men and there was an instance of that kind. "The movement that I hold as part of my living faith cannot be abandoned," he said, "even if million persons fasted to force me to give it up. To every one living faith comes from God, and God alone can turn him from it."

"What do you mean by divine guidance or the inner voice?" was the persistent question. "And how would you, and for that matter

the world, would fare if everyone claimed such guidance for himself and acted in a manner wholly different from his neighbours?"

"We would come to a pretty pass," he replied, "if Divinity had made no provision by way of self-protection. Whilst, therefore, all may lay a claim, some alone will be able to justify it. Any person falsely claiming to act under divine inspiration or the promptings of the inner voice, without having any such, will fare worse than the one falsely claiming to act under the authority of a sovereign. Whereas the latter being exposed will escape with injury to his body, the former may perish body and soul together. Charitable critics impute no fraud to me, but suggest that I am highly likely to be acting under hallucination. The result for me, even then, will not be far different from what it would be, if I was laying a false claim. A humble seeker, that I claim to be, has need to be most cautious and to preserve balance of mind. He has to reduce himself to zero before God will guide him. Let me not labour this point. The claim I have made is neither extraordinary nor exclusive. God will rule the lives of all those who will surrender themselves without any reservation to Him. In the language of the Gita, God acts through those who have acquired complete detachment, that is, self-effacement. Here is no question of hallucination. I have stated a simple scientific truth to be tested by all who have the will and the patience to acquire the necessary qualifications, which are again incredibly simple to understand and easy enough to acquire where there is determination.

"Lastly, no one need worry about my claim. What I am asking the people to do is capable of being verified by reason. Even when I shall disappear from the scene, untouchability will have to be removed. Whether the fast is divinely inspired or not, it need not be a matter of concern even to my closest associates. They may out of affection for me work with double zeal in the cause. That would be no calamity even if it was found that the fast was the foolish act of self-willed friend. And those who have neither affection nor faith in me will remain unmoved by it. Constant harping, therefore, on the contemplated fast or my claim in regard thereto, is calculated to befog the public mind and to turn the attention from the great work before the nation."

A correspondent wrote: "It is all very well for you to talk of the call of God, the inner voice, and all that. Others also can and do put forth the same claim. What are we, who have no inner voice

and who have no God to parade before the public, to do, and whom are we to believe?" In reply, Gandhi said:

"You have to believe no one but yourselves. And you must try to listen to the inner voice. But, if you will not have the expression 'inner voice', you may then use the expression 'dictates of reason' which you should obey, and if you will not parade God, I have no doubt you will parade something else, which in the end will prove to be G-O-D, for fortunately there is no one and nothing else but God in this universe. I would also submit that it is not everyone claiming to act on the urge of the inner voice has that urge. Like every other faculty, this faculty for listening to the still small voice within requires previous effort and training, perhaps much greater than what is required for the acquisition of any other faculty, and even if out of thousands of claiming only a few succeed in establishing their own claim, it is well worth running the risk of having and tolerating doubtful claimants.

"You are retarding political emancipation," stated a critic, "by forcing on public attention your views on social and religious questions and springing upon the public a hurricane agitation for their acceptance." Gandhi simply replied: "I draw no hard and fast line of demarcation between political, social, religious and other questions. I have always held that they are interdependent and that the solution of one brings nearer the solution of the rest."

"I could have understood and justified your fast for swaraj or for all-India unity, but I really cannot understand this fast on behalf of Hinduism," said another critic. "I am not ashamed of Hinduism or of being a Hindu," replied Gandhi. "I totally deny being narrow. I fancy I could not be held for a single moment by a narrow creed, and it is because the superimposition of untouchability would make Hinduism a narrow creed, I have rebelled against it, and I would count my life to be a cheap price to pay for the removal of that blot. I have nothing of the communalist in me, because my Hinduism is all-inclusive. It is not anti-Musalman or anti-Christian or anti-any-other-religion. But it is pro-Musalman pro-Christian, and pro-every-other-living-faith in the world. To me, Hinduism is but one branch from the same parent trunk, whose roots and quality we judge by the collective strength and quality of different branches put together. And if I take care of the Hindu branch on which I am sitting and which sustains me, surely I am taking care also of the

sister branches. If the Hindu branch is poisoned, the poison is likely to spread to others. If that branch withers, the parent will be the weaker for its withering. If God gives me the privilege of dying for this Hinduism of my conception, I shall have sufficiently died for the unity of all and even for swaraj."

In December, attention was diverted from the principal issue by an incident in Ratnagiri jail, where Appasaheb Patwardhan, a Caste Hindu began to fast because he was not allowed, as he wished, to clean the latrines. Gandhi began to fast on December 3 in sympathy, but he was without any nourishment for little more than a day, for the Government of India adjusted the matter by undertaking to inquire from the provincial governments how far the jail rules in such a matter could be modified. In an interview, Gandhi said: "Mine is a peculiar position. Though I have hardened my heart, there are things about which I have an exceedingly sensitive nature. To me, there is no difference of degree in matters of moment, and as I am capable of giving my life for a great cause, I am equally capable of laying my life for the life of a comrade. In the present case, the question before me was one of choice either to allow a dear comrade to die and myself live unconcerned, or in an attempt to put mine in jeopardy. If I deserted him, I would be capable of deserting the Harijans, and the man who deserts comrades is not worth much." He said: "Who knows I may have to go through a series of fasts and die by inches! My life is largely governed by reason, and when it fails, it is governed by a superior force, that is, faith."

In the meanwhile, South India had become the storm centre of anti-untouchability work. Interest focused on the question of entry into the Guruvayur temple. The whole point of concentrating on Guruvayur was that the Depressed Classes were numerous in that district and that a large majority of the Caste Hindus was believed to favour their admission to the temples. To test this contention a plebiscite was carried out. Gandhi observed: "The total population entitled to temple entry being approximately 65,000, the outside estimate of adults may be taken as 30,000. And, as a matter of fact 27,465 adult men and women were actually visited for receiving their votes. Of these, 56 per cent were in favour of temple entry, 9 per cent voted against, 8 per cent were neutral, and 27 per cent abstained." This by no means silenced the critics. They argued that of the population entitled to temple entry, only a small proportion

was sufficiently devout to care for the privileges. The views of the devout minority Gandhi took into consideration, and he suggested a compromise. They might visit the temple at different times by agreement, and the priest could perform a rite of purification for their benefit, if it was desired. He reasoned: "If there is a person who objects to my presence, I would like to respect his objection, so long as he does not deprive me of the right that belongs to me. So long as I am permitted to have a legitimate share of the day for offering worship side by side of those who have no objection to my presence, I would be satisfied."

At this point the Zamorin of Calicut and his followers took refuge in the law. The temple, they claimed, was a private temple and not bound, therefore, to respect the public opinion. Gandhi retorted by citing the judgement of the Madras High Court: "The Guruvayur is not a private temple but a public temple and every Hindu has a right to worship in it."

Still the Zamorin took refuge in the terms of the trust, under which he professed himself unable to amend the old custom to meet the prevailing public opinion. If a change in the current practice was to be secured, legislation appeared necessary. With this end in view two bills were framed by the reformers, one for presentation in the Madras Legislative Council and the other in the Central Assembly. The Assembly bill, sponsored by Ranga Iyer, proposed that no custom or usage based on untouchability should be recognized by any court of law and Dr. Subbaroyan's bill, the one prepared for the Madras Legislative Council, sought to empower the Hindu residents in any locality to secure an alteration by a majority vote in the established practice regarding the admission of the untouchables in the local temples. When the news about the proposed legislation was received, Gandhi wrote: "In view of the official announcement that the Viceregal decision as to the sanction for the introduction in the Madras Legislative Council of Dr. Subbaroyan's permissive bill with reference to temple entry could not be possibly announced before 15th January, the fast contemplated to take place on the second day of the New Year will be indefinitely postponed, and in any case up to the date of the announcement of the Viceregal decision. In this postponement Kelappan concurs."

Gandhi's campaign eclipsed everything else. The Government's dual policy of suppression and appeasement went unnoticed. The

Government had counted on a fight to a finish in six weeks, but there was no sign of it, despite stern measures. Meanwhile, the third Round Table Conference met at the end of the year. Both in the personnel and procedure there was marked difference. Even Liberals like Sastri, Sir Pheroze Sethna and Chintamani, who had participated in the previous sessions, had no place in it. Jinnah himself was not among the invitees, and the nationalist Muslims were studiously ignored. The opposition Labour Party refused to take any part. The British Government chose to reject the advice of Liberals like Sir Chimanlal Setalvad who stressed the importance of securing the Congress co-operation. "With all my differences from Congressmen," remarked Sapru, "I hold that as far as Mr. Gandhi is concerned, he sums up in his personality the highest degree of self-respect in India and the highest degree of patriotism." And he added that he did not wish Congressmen to be treated as outlaws, but to work the constitution. "If we are to discuss all these things, with whom are we to discuss them? As far as Mr. Gandhi is concerned, he will simply refuse to discuss any political question inside the jail. I am making an earnest appeal to you to consider the situation. I tell you that I have never known in my thirty years' experience, as a public man, so much of bitterness and so much of hostile feeling in the Indian homes, as I have witnessed during the last few months."

Harijan

1933

ON JANUARY 4, 1933, fell the anniversary of the civil disobedience movement and according to the instructions of Rajendra Prasad, the acting president, meetings were held all over the country and a special statement prepared for the occasion was read in the midst of arrests and lathi charges. Rajendra Prasad was arrested and his place was taken by Aney. There was no programme as such and the minds of the people were confused.

Many Congressmen who interviewed Gandhi told him that there was much suppressed talk among the workers about his action in setting up an agitation against untouchability from within the prison, and they did not know whether to prosecute civil disobedience or to take an active part in the campaign against untouchability. "For me, there is nothing inconsistent in my conduct," he replied in his statement dated January 7. "It would be foolish, if not sinful, if I did not use all the talents that my Master has given me, whenever I have the opportunity for their use. And I have used all the talents I have for civil disobedience. I found that I have also talents for the service of Harijans, which I could use, and I am using them. In doing so, I have abated nothing from my existing obligation. I have added service of the 'untouchables' to it. I had no question before me of making a choice. With those who are outside the prison, the case, I know, is different. The civil resisters have to decide whether to continue civil disobedience or take up anti-untouchability work. This is a question I cannot decide for them. I am constitutionally unfit now, having entered the prison gates, to guide the movement of civil disobedience in any shape or form. Even if I thought otherwise, I must not guide it, as I have bound myself in honour not to take advantage of the considerable latitude given to me regarding untouchability, by directly or indirectly, and secretly or openly, guiding the movement. Everyone, therefore, has to take his or her own

decision without reference to me. When I decided to conduct anti-untouchability campaign from within the prison, I had not civil resisters in my mind as such, but I had the whole of Hindu society. If that whole fails to respond, civil resisters cannot remove the age-long evil. But a civil resister may think that there is no disciplined resistance left in him or her, or that the spirit of resistance is played out, or even that there is no such thing as civil resistance and that all resistance is necessarily uncivil or incivil. It is obvious that I can offer no guidance in the consideration of these problems. These are matters for those who are outside to judge. If many are filled with doubts, let them confer together and come to a decision as to the proper course to take. Those who have no doubt may be reminded of the celebrated Sanskrit verse whose exact equivalent perhaps is to be found in the equally celebrated English proverb, 'Much wants more and loses all.' "

On January 23 the Viceroy gave his sanction to the introduction of Ranga Iyer's Untouchability Abolition Bill in the Assembly. It was made clear that the Government did not commit themselves to accepting its principles and further that the fullest opportunity would be given to every section of the Hindu community to express an opinion on its provisions. Sanction to Dr. Subbaroyan's Temple Entry Bill in the Madras Council was refused, on the ground that it was too far-reaching in implication for enactment by a provincial legislature. Later, when Ranga Iyer drafted a second bill based on Dr. Subbaroyan's and applied for a sanction to introduce it in the Assembly, permission was given, subject to the same qualifications as in the case of his former bill.

Touching the Viceregal decision, Gandhi now hurled another of his challenges to Hindu conscience. "The movement for temple entry now broadens from Guruvayur in the extreme south to Hardwar in the north," he said, "and my fast, though it remains further postponed, depends not now upon Guruvayur only, but extends automatically to all temples in general. That is to say, the fast becomes dependent upon the action of reformers not regarding the Madras Bill, which was to cover Guruvayur only, but regarding all-India bill which covers all temples including Guruvayur." And he concluded that no ordinary propaganda would ever convince the Hindu mind of the sense of wrong of untouchability, if it was not already convinced by years of work in that behalf. "It requires then, as it

has done before now, the extraordinary propaganda of penance. It may be that it needs the stimulus of the fast on the part of one who has made his life one with them. If so, they shall have it. They must either remove untouchability or remove me from their midst."

On February 11, 1933, first issue of *Harijan* weekly, priced at one anna, was issued from Poona. Introducing it, Gandhi wrote: "The English edition of *Harijan* is being published by and for the Servants of Untouchables Society, at my request. Ten thousand copies are being printed. I would like every English-knowing Harijan student and every untouchability worker to have a free copy on a certified application. This is possible only through the active co-operation of the reader who can pay more than his own subscription. And by paying subscriptions for yourself or for others, you buy the right of, and recognize the duty of, serving the cause in every legitimate manner possible for you. Thus, you can become an active helper in spreading the message of *Harijan* among those who are opposing the reform. And this requires special qualifications. If you diligently study *Harijan,* it will equip you for the delicate task. It will give you an epitome of the week's doings in various parts of India in connection with the campaign against untouchability. It will also tell you what the others are doing and what the opponents are saying. It will lay bare the weaknesses and mistakes of workers. Will you become a fellow worker in this movement of liberating over forty millions of human beings from the intolerable yoke and of purifying Hinduism? I do not despair of even some opponents subscribing to *Harijan.* I am an optimist. I have no quarrel with the opponents. These pages will be written as much for them as for the reformers. If *Harijan* stands for truth, and if the reformers have patience, the opponents of today will be the reformers of tomorrow."

Explaining the term "Harijan", Gandhi wrote: "It is not a name of my own coining. Some years ago, several 'untouchable' correspondents complained that I used the word 'asprishya' in the pages of *Navajivan.* 'Asprishya' means literally untouchable. I then invited them to suggest a better name, and one of the untouchable correspondents suggested the adoption of the name 'Harijan', on the strength of its having been used by the first poet-saint of Gujarat. Although, the quotation he sent me did not exactly fit the case he wanted to make out for the adoption, I thought that it was a good word. Harijan means 'a man of God'. All the religions of the world

describe God pre-eminently as the Friend of the friendless, Help of the helpless, and Protector of the weak. The rest of the world apart, in India, who can be more friendless, helpless or weaker than the forty million or more Hindus, who are classified as untouchables? If, therefore, any body of people can be fitly described as men of God, they are surely these helpless, friendless and despised people. Hence, in the pages of *Navajivan,* since the correspondence, I have adopted Harijan as the name signifying 'untouchables'. And, when God chose to entrust me with their service, even whilst undergoing imprisonment, I could not use any other word for describing them. I recoil with horror from that word and all it implies. Not that the change of name brings about any change of status, but one may at least be spared the use of the term which is itself one of reproach. When the Caste Hindus have of their own inner conviction and, therefore, voluntarily got rid of the present-day untouchability, we shall all be called Harijans, for, according to my opinion, Caste Hindus will then have found favour with God and may, therefore, be fitly described as His men."

Rabindranath Tagore contributed a poem called, "The Cleanser", for the first issue of *Harijan.* In response to a request for a message, Dr. Ambedkar replied: "I cannot give a message." He, however, expressed his views on the Hindu social organization: "The outcaste is a by-product of the caste system. There will be outcastes as long as there are castes. And nothing can emancipate the outcaste except the destruction of the caste system."

Gandhi wrote: "Dr. Ambedkar is bitter. He has every reason to feel so. He has received a liberal education. He has more than the talents of the average educated Indian. Outside India, he is received with honour and affection, but, in India, among Hindus, at every step, he is reminded that he is one of the outcastes of Hindu society. It is nothing to his shame, for, he has done no wrong. His exterior is as clean as that of the cleanest and the proudest Brahmin. Of his interior, the world knows as little as of that of any of us. In spite of all this, he 'believes that it will be a most unwarranted presumption on his part to suppose that he has sufficient worth in the eyes of the Hindus which would make them treat any message from him with respect.' This is the Caste Hindus' shame, not his, but I would like him to feel that there are today thousands of Caste Hindus who would listen to his message with the same respect and consideration

that they would give to that of any other leader and that in their estimation there is no person high and no person low. I would like him to know that *Harijan* is not my weekly. So far as the proprietary rights are concerned, it belongs to the Servants of Untouchables Society and, therefore, I would like him to feel that it is as much his, as of any other Hindu.

"As to the burden of his message, the opinion he holds about the caste system is shared by many educated Hindus. I have not, however, been able to share that opinion. And, I do not believe the caste system, even as distinguished from Varnashram, to be an 'odious and vicious dogma'. It has its limitations and defects, but there is nothing sinful about it, as there is about untouchability, and if it is a by-product of the caste system, it is only in the same sense that an ugly growth is of a body, or weeds of a crop. It is as wrong to destroy caste because of the outcaste, as it would be to destroy a body because of an ugly growth in it, or of a crop because of the weeds. The outcasteness, in the sense we understand it, has, therefore, to be destroyed totally. This is an excess to be removed, if the whole system is not to perish. Untouchability is the product not of the caste system, but of the distinction of high and low, that has crept into Hinduism and is corroding it. The attack on untouchability is an attack upon this 'high-and-low'ness. And the moment untouchability goes, caste system itself will be purified, that is to say, according to my dream, it will resolve itself into the true Varna Dharma, the four divisions of society, each complementary of the other and none inferior or superior to any other, and each as necessary for the whole body of Hinduism as any other. How it can be, and what Varnashram is, it is not necessary to examine here. But, such being my faith, I have always differed from those distinguished countrymen, Dr. Ambedkar among them, who have held that the untouchability will not go without destruction of Varnashram Dharma. They have made no distinction between caste and *varna*. But that is another story. At present, it is the untouchable, the outcaste, with whom the Hindu reformers, whether they believe in Varnashram or not, have agreed to deal. The opposition to untouchability is common to both. Therefore, the present joint fight is restricted only to the removal of untouchability, and I would invite Dr. Ambedkar and those who think with him to throw themselves, heart and soul, into the campaign against the monster of untouchability. And it is highly likely

that at the end of it, we shall all find that there is nothing to fight against in Varnashram. If, however, Varnashram even then looks an ugly thing, the whole of the Hindu society will fight it. For, this campaign against untouchability is not one of compulsion but of conversion. At the end of the chapter, we shall all find ourselves in the same camp. Should it prove otherwise, it will be time enough to consider how and by whom Varnashram is to be fought."

The temple entry campaign intensified much to the annoyance of the orthodox as well as the reformist opinion. On the one hand, Gandhi was dubbed an iconoclast and, on the other, a conservative. An American wrote: "Great religious truths which the prophets of religion have apprehended and proclaimed have always been lost when their disciples have tried to localize them in priestcraft and in temples. Therefore, I can see no advantage in gaining permission for Harijans to enter the temples. I think that they must learn the independence of all priests and all temples." Gandhi commented: "I can appreciate much of the argument, but I venture to think that it is inconclusive, because it has omitted material facts. Some priests are bad. Temples, churches, and mosques often show corruption, and more often deterioration. Nevertheless, it would be impossible to prove that all priests are bad, or have been bad, and all churches, temples and mosques are hotbeds of corruption and superstition. Nor does the argument take note of this fundamental fact that no faith has done without a habitation; and I go further that in the very nature of the things, it cannot exist so long as man remains as he is constituted. His very body has been rightly called the temple of the Holy Ghost, though innumerable such temples belie fact and are hotbeds of corruption used for dissoluteness. And I presume that it will be accepted as a conclusive answer to a sweeping suggestion that all bodies should be destroyed for the corruption of many, if it can be shown, as it can be, that there are some bodies which are proper temples of the Holy Ghost. The cause for the corruption of many bodies will have to be sought elsewhere. Temples of stone and mortar are nothing else than a natural extension of these human temples and although they were in their conception undoubtedly habitations of God like human temples, they have been subject to the same law of decay as the latter.

"I know of no religion or sect that has done or is doing without its house of God, variously described as a temple, mosque, church,

synagogue or *agiari*. Nor is it certain that any of the great reformers, including Jesus, destroyed, or discarded, temples altogether. All of them sought to banish corruption from the temples as well as from society. Some reformers, if not all, appear to have preached from temples. I have ceased to visit temples for several years, but I do not regard myself, on that account, as a better person than before. My mother never missed going to the temple, when she was in a fit state to go there. Probably, her faith was far greater than mine. Though I do not visit temples, there are millions whose faith is sustained through these temples, churches and mosques. They are not blind followers of a superstition, nor are they fanatics. Superstition and fanaticism are not their monopoly. These vices have their root in our hearts and our minds.

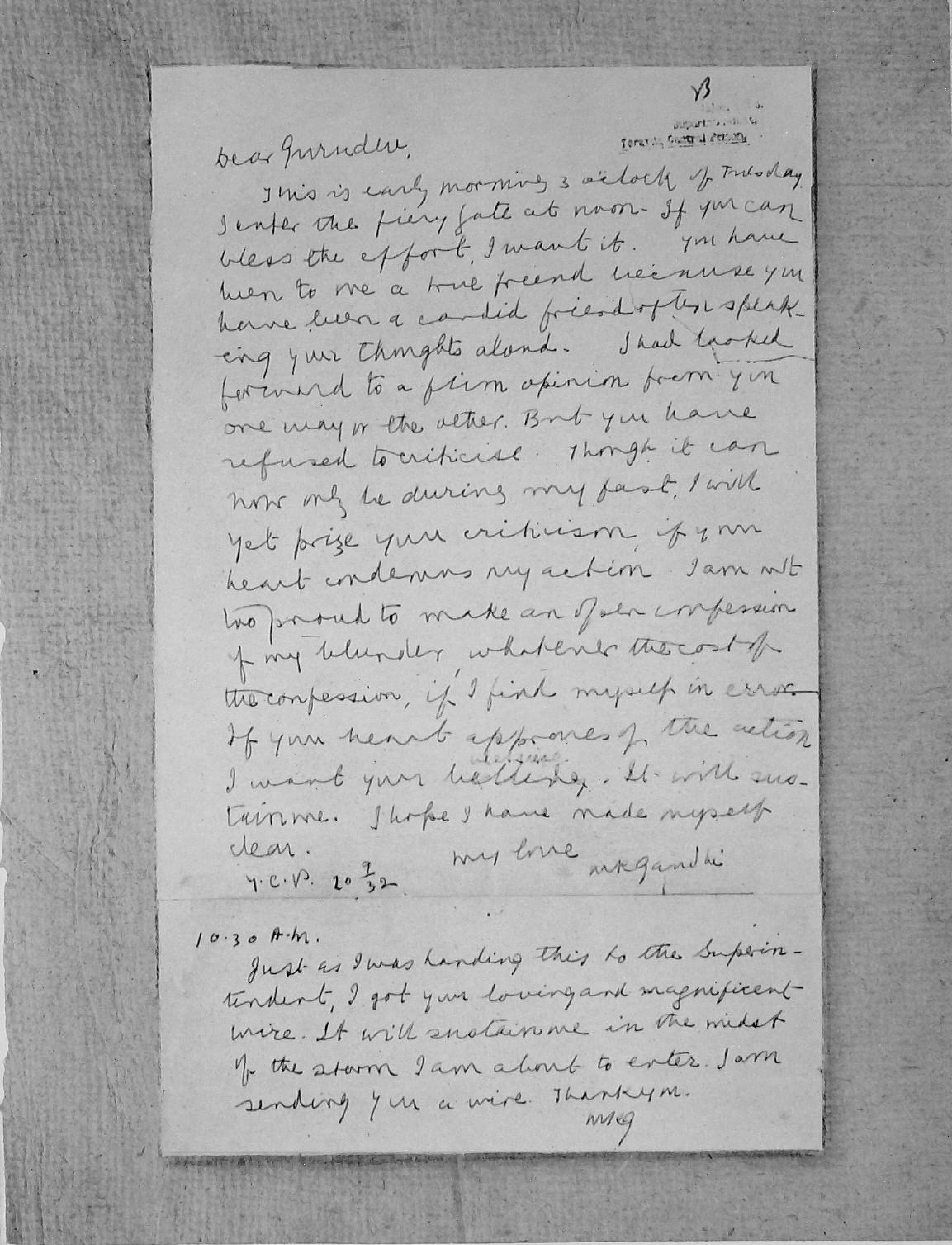
"My advocacy of temple entry I think to be perfectly consistent with the declaration, which I had often made in Europe, that Truth is God. It is that belief which makes it possible, even at the risk of losing friendships, popularity and prestige, to advocate temple entry for Harijans. The Truth that I know, or I feel that I know, demands that advocacy from me. Hinduism loses its right to make a universal appeal, if it closes its temples to the Harijans.

"That, temples and temple worship are in need of radical reform must be admitted. But all reform without the temple entry will be to tamper with the disease. I am aware that the American friend's objection is not based upon the corruption or impurity of temples. His objection is much more radical. He does not believe in them at all. I have endeavoured to show that his position is untenable in the light of facts which can be verified from everyday experience. To reject the necessity of temples is to reject the necessity of God, religion and earthly existence."

Replying to another critic, Gandhi defended Brahminism of his own conception:

"I believe Brahminism to be unadulterated wisdom leading one to the realization of Brahma, God. If I did not hold that view, I should no longer call myself a Hindu. Brahmins, however, like the other members of the human family, are not all true representatives of Brahminism. But I have to believe that, of all the classes in the world, the Brahmin will show the largest percentage of those who have given up their all in search of knowledge, that is, Truth. I know of no system other than Hinduism under which a class has

been set apart from generation to generation for the exclusive pursuit of divine knowledge and consigned to voluntary poverty. That Brahmins could not keep up the high standard that they had imposed upon themselves is no special fault of theirs. Their imperfection merely proves that they were as fallible as the rest of mankind, and so corruption crept into the so-called sacred books, and we have the spectacle of the most selfless rules governing Brahmins side by side with the selfish rules also made by them to help their breed. But it was the Brahmins who rose against corruptions and the selfish interpolations into the sacred texts. It was they who time and again strove to purge themselves and society of evil. I confess that I have the highest reverence for Brahminism, and a sneaking regard for the Brahmins and that, in spite of what is to me the sorrowful spectacle of the Brahmins so called, making a frantic effort against the reform movement and lending their undoubted ability to the opposition. I am consoled, and let every unbiased Hindu be consoled, by the fact that the reform movement, too, is being led by those who are born Brahmins, but who today take no pride in their birth. If a census was taken of the workers against untouchability, I think it will be found that the majority of workers who are devoted to the cause without any remuneration, or with just enough to keep body and soul together, are Brahmins. I admit that Brahmins as a class have suffered degradation. If they had not, if they had lived up to their profession, Hinduism would not be in degraded state in which it is. It would be a contradiction in terms to suggest that Hinduism is what it is, in spite of the correct life of the Brahmins. That could not be, because they themselves have taught us to believe that they are the true custodians of the divine wisdom and that, where there is divine wisdom, there is no fear, there is no grinding pauperism, there is no high and low state, there is no greed, jealousy, plunder, war, and the like. Because Brahminism went down, it drew down with it all the other classes, and I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that, if Brahminism does not revive, Hinduism must perish, and for me the infallible test of the revival of Brahminism, that is, Hinduism, is the root and branch removal of untouchability. The more I study the Hindu scriptures, and the more I discuss them with Brahmins, the more I feel convinced that untouchability is the greatest blot upon Hinduism. And this conviction is amply supported by many learned Brahmins who have no axes to grind, who are



Dear Gurudev,

This is early morning 3 o'clock of Tuesday. I enter the fiery gate at noon. If you can bless the effort, I want it. You have been to me a true friend because you have been a candid friend often speaking your thoughts aloud. I had looked forward to a firm opinion from you one way or the other. But you have refused to criticise. Though it can now only be during my fast, I will yet prize your criticism, if your heart condemns my action. I am not too proud to make an open confession of my blunder whatever the cost of the confession, if I find myself in error. If your heart approves of the action I want your blessing. It will sustain me. I hope I have made myself clear.

My love
M K Gandhi

Y.C.P. 20-9-32

10.30 A.M.

Just as I was handing this to the Superintendent, I got your loving and magnificent wire. It will sustain me in the midst of the storm I am about to enter. I am sending you a wire. Thank you.

MKG

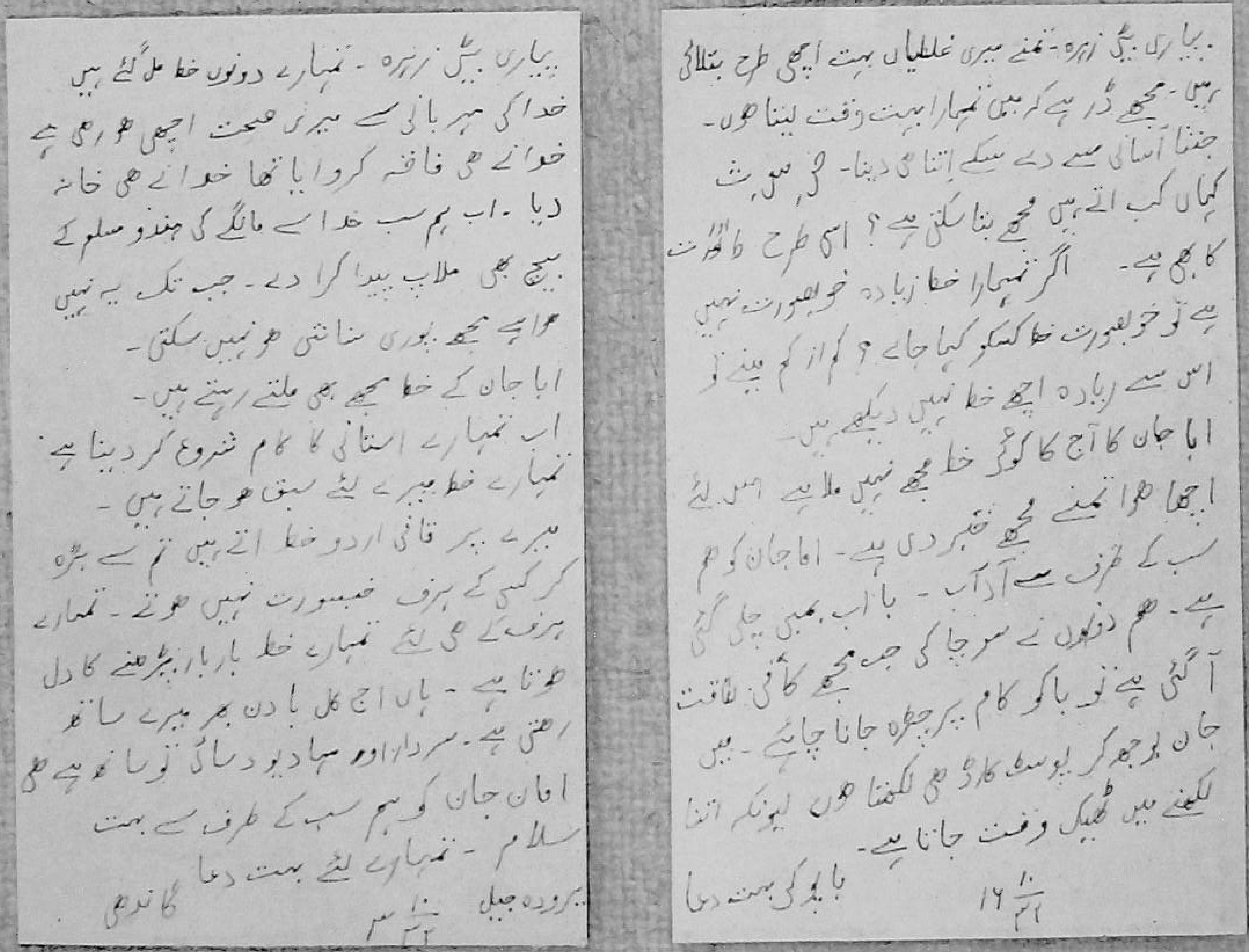
Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's letter to Tagore, dated Yeravda Central Prison, September 20, 1932, drafted at 3 a.m. on the day of the commencement of the fast

Courtesy : Home Department, Government of Bombay

The mango tree in a segregated yard of the jail under which the leaders discussed Yeravda pact with Gandhi, September 1932

Yeravda Central Prison

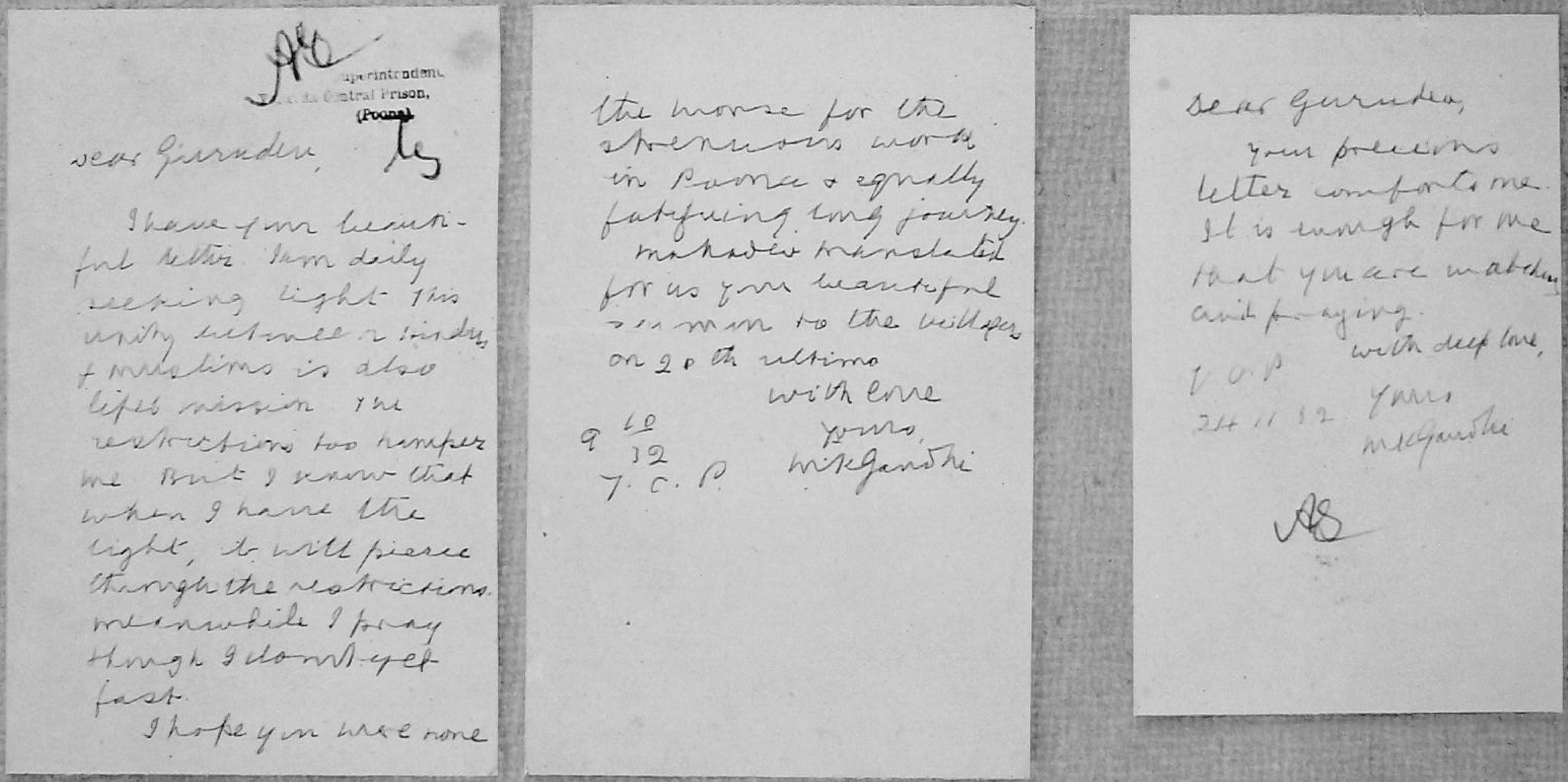


پیاری بیٹی زہرہ - تمہارے دونوں خط مل گئے ہیں
خدا کی مہربانی سے میری صحت اچھی ہو رہی ہے
خدا نے ہی فاقہ کروایا تھا خدا نے ہی خاتمہ
دیا - اب ہم سب خدا سے مانگیں کہ ہندو مسلم کے
بیچ بھی ملاپ پیدا کرا دے - جب تک یہ نہیں
ہوا ہے مجھے پوری شانتی ہو نہیں سکتی -
ابا جان کے خط مجھے بھی ملتے رہتے ہیں -
اب تمہارے استانی کا کام شروع کر دینا ہے -
تمہارے خط میرے لئے سبق ہو جاتے ہیں -
میرے پر قانی اردو خط آتے ہیں تم سے بڑھ
کر کسی کے حرف خوبصورت نہیں ہوتے - تمہارے
حرف کے ہی لئے تمہارے خط بار بار پڑھنے کا دل
ہوتا ہے - ہاں آج کل با دن بھر میرے ساتھ
رہتی ہے - سردار اور مہادیو دیسائی تو ساتھ ہے ہی
اماں جان کو ہم سب کی طرف سے بہت
سلام - تمہارے لئے بہت دعا
یروڈہ جیل ۳-۱۰-۳۲ گاندھی

پیاری بیٹی زہرہ - تمنے میری غلطیاں بہت اچھی طرح بتلائی
ہیں - مجھے ڈر ہے کہ میں تمہارا بہت وقت لیتا ہوں -
جتنا آسانی سے دے سکے اتنا ہی دینا - [illegible]
کہاں کب آتے ہیں مجھے بتا سکتی ہے؟ اس طرح [illegible]
کا بھی ہے - اگر تمہارا خط زیادہ خوبصورت نہیں
ہے تو خوبصورت خط کس کو کہا جائے؟ کم از کم میں نے تو
اس سے زیادہ اچھے خط نہیں دیکھے ہیں -
ابا جان کا آج کا کوئی خط مجھے نہیں ملا ہے اس لئے
اچھا ہوا تمنے مجھے خبر دی ہے - اماں جان کو ہم
سب کی طرف سے آداب - با اب بمبئی چلی گئی
ہے - ہم دونوں نے سوچا کہ جب مجھے کافی طاقت
آ گئی ہے تو با کو کام پر چھوڑ جانا چاہئے - میں
جان بوجھ کر پوسٹ کارڈ ہی لکھتا ہوں کیونکہ اتنا
لکھنے میں ٹھیک وقت جاتا ہے -
باپو کی بہت دعا ۱۶/۱۰

Courtesy : Zora Ansari

Gandhi's letters to Zora Ansari, written in Urdu, dated Yeravda jail, October 3 and October 16, 1932



perintendent
da Central Prison,
(Poona)

Dear Gurudev,

I have your beautiful letter. I am daily seeking light. This unity between Hindus & Muslims is also life's mission. The restrictions too hamper me. But I know that when I have the light, it will pierce through the restrictions. Meanwhile I pray though I don't yet fast.

I hope you were none the worse for the strenuous work in Poona & equally fatiguing long journey.

Mahadev translated for us your beautiful sermon to the villagers on 20th ultimo.

With love
yours,
M.K.Gandhi

9-10-32
Y.C.P.

Dear Gurudev,

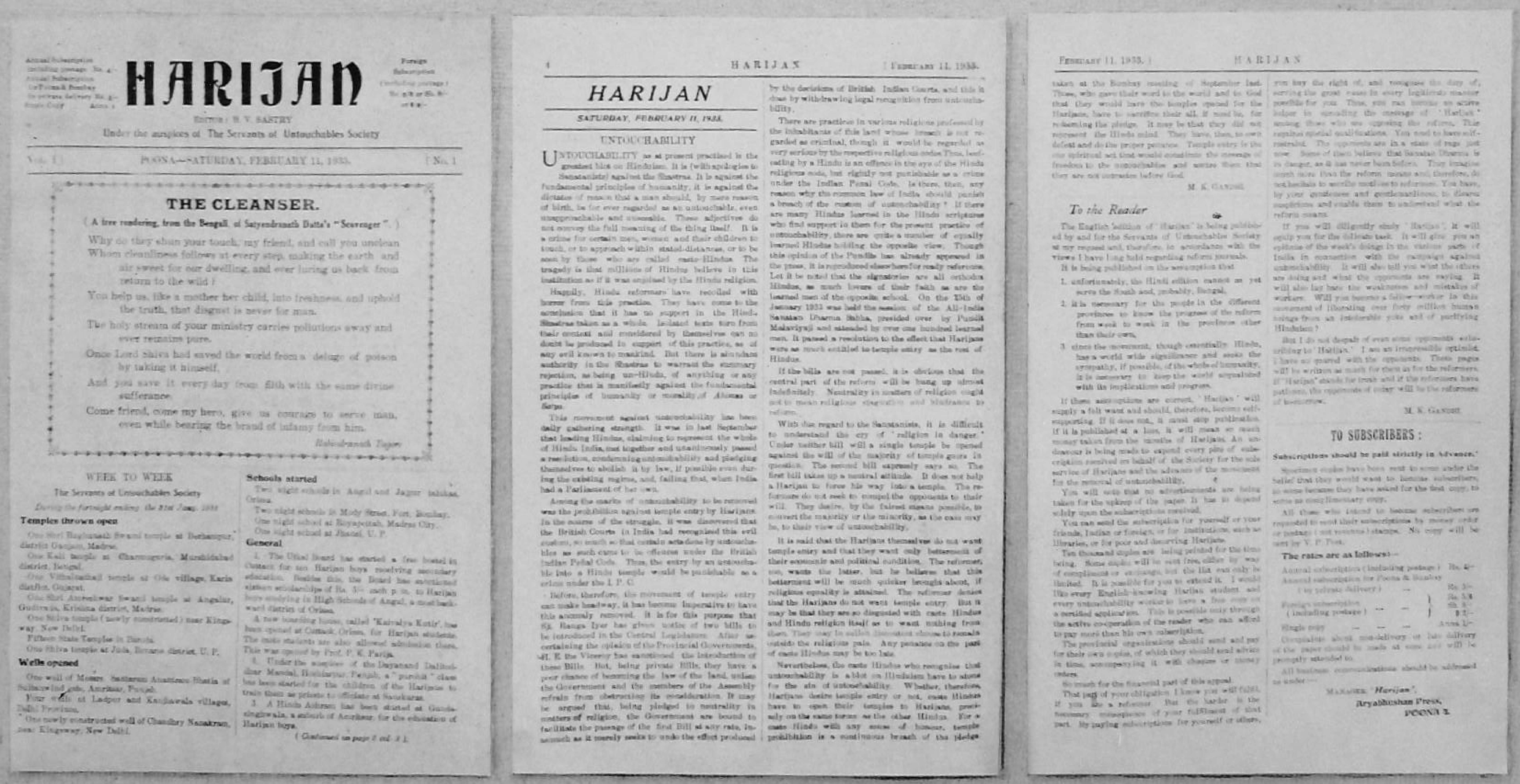
Your precious letter comforts me. It is enough for me that you are watching and praying.

With deep love,
yours
M.K.Gandhi

Y.C.P.
24-11-32

Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's letters to Tagore, dated Yeravda Central Prison, October 9 and November 24, 1932


HARIJAN

EDITOR: R. V. SASTRY

Under the auspices of The Servants of Untouchables Society

Vol. I] POONA—SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1933. [No. 1

THE CLEANSER.

(A free rendering, from the Bengali, of Satyendranath Datta's "Scavenger".)

Why do they shun your touch, my friend, and call you unclean
Whom cleanliness follows at every step, making the earth and
air sweet for our dwelling, and ever luring us back from
return to the wild!
You help us, like a mother her child, into freshness, and uphold
the truth, that disgust is never for man.
The holy stream of your ministry carries pollutions away and
ever remains pure.
Once Lord Shiva had saved the world from a deluge of poison
by taking it himself,
And you save it every day from filth with the same divine
sufferance.
Come friend, come my hero, give us courage to serve man,
even while bearing the brand of infamy from him.

Rabindranath Tagore

WEEK TO WEEK

The Servants of Untouchables Society

Temples thrown open

Wells opened

Schools started

General

HARIJAN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1933.

UNTOUCHABILITY

To the Reader

M. K. GANDHI

TO SUBSCRIBERS:

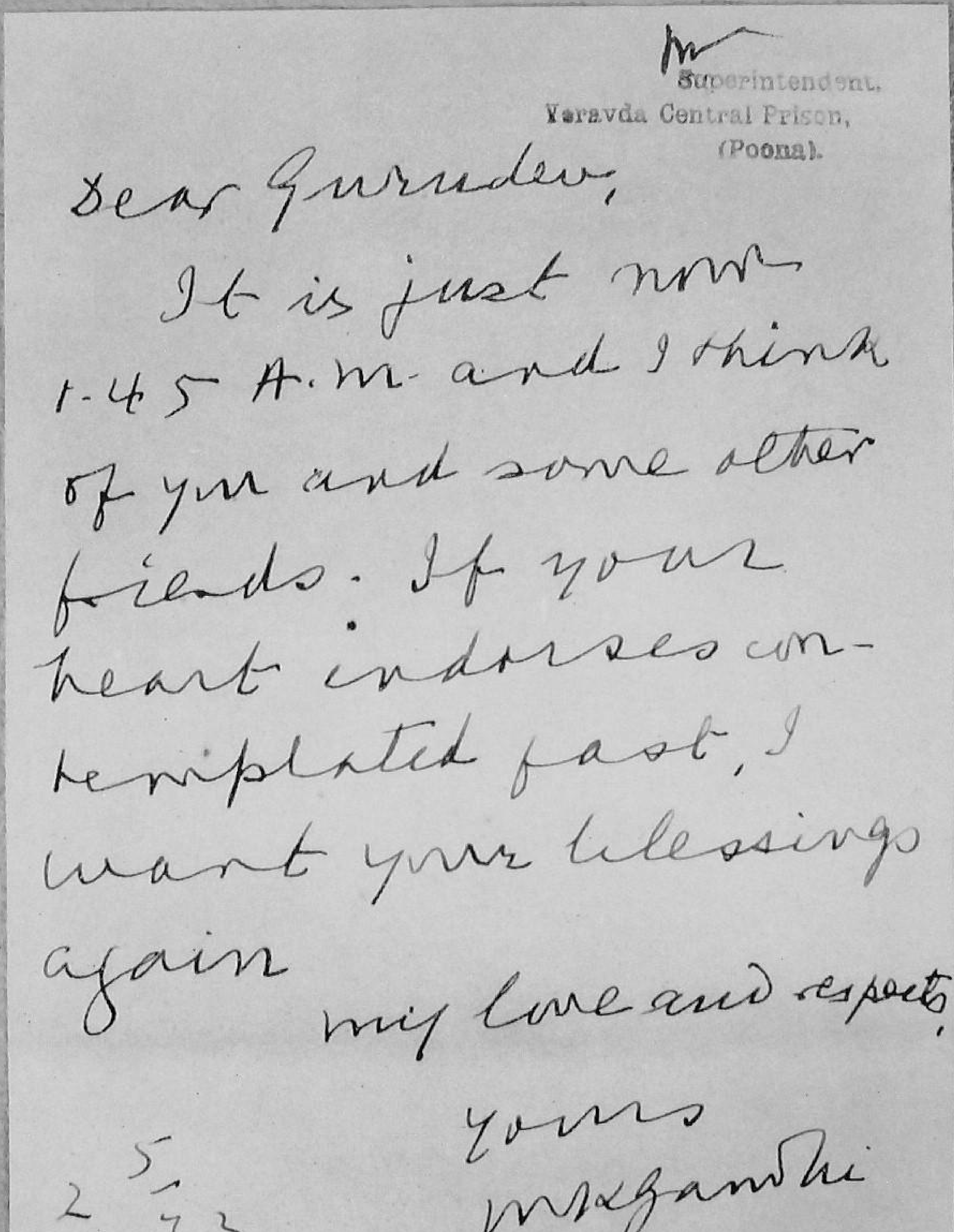
Subscriptions should be paid strictly in Advance.

The rates are as follows:—

MANAGER, 'Harijan',
Aryabhushan Press,
POONA 2.

Courtesy: Mahadev Shastri

The first issue of *Harijan*, dated February 11, 1933, conducted by Gandhi from Yeravda Central Prison



Superintendent,
Yeravda Central Prison,
(Poona).

Dear Gurudev,

It is just now 1-45 A.M. and I think of you and some other friends. If your heart endorses contemplated fast, I want your blessings again

my love and respects.

Yours
M.K. Gandhi

2/5/33

Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's letter to Tagore, dated Yeravda Central Prison, May 2, 1933, on the eve of his another fast

devoted to the pursuit of truth only and who receive nothing, not even thanks for their opinion. But today Brahmins and Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are mere labels. There is an utter confusion of *varna*, and I wish that all the Hindus will voluntarily call themselves Shudras. That is the only way to demonstrate the truth of Brahminism and to revive Varna Dharma in its true state. Because all Hindus may be classed as Shudras, wisdom and power and wealth will not disappear, but they will be all used for the service of not a sectional religion, but the service of truth and humanity. Anyway, in battling against untouchability, and in dedicating myself to that battle, I have no less an ambition than to see a complete regeneration of humanity. It may be a mere dream, as unreal as the silver in the sea shell. It is not so to me while the dream lasts, and in the words of Romain Rolland, 'Victory lies not in realization of the goal, but in a relentless pursuit after it.' "

The critics asked Gandhi: "Why is that you, who have always sworn by non-co-operation with the Government and legislatures, are now carrying on propaganda for the passage of untouchability bills by the present legislatures?" He replied: "I cannot, consistently with my obligation as a prisoner, deal with this question as fully as I would like to. But I can say this much that there is no doctrine in the world which admits of the same kind of applications of the same doctrine. Thus, my love for a starving man would require me to feed him. My love for my overfed child would require me to starve him, even though he may be crying for food. I am today non-co-operating with sanatanist friends, but I would like my questioners to analyse my non-co-operation, and they will find that in the very act of non-co-operation, I am seeking their co-operation in my campaign. Exactly in the same manner, I may non-co-operate as much as I like with the Government or any institution, but I would be a very foolish man, if I did not know that I was non-co-operating in order to secure co-operation from them. Thus, I am now seeking the co-operation of the Government and the legislature in order to further my purpose, which I hold to be very sacred and good."

Orthodox Hindus agitated for defeating the anti-untouchability bills and succeeded in postponing them from month to month. Even men like Malaviya suggested that the bills be circulated. A violent controversy raged over these bills and strongly worded petitions to the Viceroy were sent by orthodox Hindu organizations.

Gandhi argued with the opponents, but he would not condone any false agitation. To intensify the campaign, even his close colleagues like Rajagopalachari referred to the possibility of a fast by Gandhi. "Such exploitation robs a spiritual act of all its value," observed Gandhi. "The dreaded event may never come to pass. All I know is that there is, so far as I am aware, no possibility of its coming. It is wrong to speculate over the contingency. I, therefore, implore the public to dismiss from their minds, and be unaffected by, the remote possibility of fast by me in this campaign against untouchability and to accept my assurance that, if such a fast does come, it will have come in obedience to the call of Truth, which is God. I will not be a traitor to God to please the whole world."

He gave forum to his critics in *Harijan* and patiently argued and repleaded. At his request, sympathetic scholars contributed articles refuting untouchability. Legal brains like Sapru and Jayakar came to his rescue to justify legislation against untouchability. *Harijan* devoted its space to the cause of the outcastes, and eschewed politics altogether. "Though I am not a prisoner-in-law, I am conducting the paper as if I was one in fact."

Call From Within

1933

To DISCREDIT the reform movement, champions of orthodoxy spent lavishly and started new journals. They distorted Gandhi's views and put in his mouth fantastic utterances. Some pundits visited him in the jail and they argued with him at length. The Yeravda pact was in jeopardy. The Caste Hindus of Bengal passed a resolution in the Council, denouncing the pact. Dr. Ambedkar launched a campaign against the proposed panel system of election.

Under "Thinking Aloud", in *Harijan* dated April 15, 1933, Gandhi wrote: "I have a profound belief in the method of the fast, both private and public. It may come again any day without any warning even to me. If it comes, I shall welcome it as a great privilege and a joy. Untouchability is a big sin. It may not be washed without the blood of many servants. But they will have to be fit instruments. The occasion will come to me, if I am found worthy for the sacrifice."

On April 29, after the morning prayer, Gandhi placed in the hands of his companions a piece of paper, announcing his decision to fast and asking them not to argue with him, as the decision was final. On the eve of the announcement, there occurred a unique spiritual experience in his life: "I had gone to sleep the night before without the slightest idea of having to declare a fast next morning. At about twelve o'clock in the night something wakes me up suddenly, and then some voice—within or without, I cannot say—whispers, 'Thou must go on a fast.' 'How many days?' I ask. The voice again says, 'Twenty-one days'. 'When does it begin?' I ask. It says, 'You begin tomorrow.' I went off to sleep after making the decision. I did not tell anything to my companions until after the morning prayer."

On April 30, Gandhi issued the following statement: "A tempest has been raging within me for some days, and I have been struggling against it. On the eve of Harijan Day, the voice became insistent, and said: 'Why don't you do it?' I resisted it. But resistance was in

vain, and the resolution was made to go on an unconditional and irrevocable fast for twenty-one days beginning from Monday noon, the 8th May ending on Monday noon, the 29th May.

"As I look back upon the immediate past, many are the causes, too sacred to mention, that must have precipitated the fast. But they are all connected with the Harijan cause. The fast is against nobody in particular, and against everybody who wants to participate in the joy of it without, for the time being, having to fast himself or herself. But it is particularly against myself. It is a heart prayer for purification of self and associates for greater vigilance and watchfulness. But nobody who appreciates the step about to be taken is to join me. Any such fast will be a torture of themselves and of me. Let this fast, however, be a preparation for many such fasts to be taken by purer and more deserving persons than myself.

"During all these months since September last, I have been studying the correspondence and literature, and holding prolonged discussions with men and women, learned and ignorant Harijans and non-Harijans. The evil is greater than even I had thought it to be. It will not be eradicated by money, external organization and even political power for Harijans, though all these are necessary. But to be effective, they must follow or at least accompany inward organization and inward power, in other words, self-purification. This can only come by fasting and prayer. We may not approach the God of Truth in arrogance of strength, but in the meekness of the weak and the helpless.

"But the mere fast of the body is nothing without the will behind. It must be a genuine confession of an inner fast and irrepressible longing to express truth and nothing but the truth.

"Therefore, those only are privileged to fast for the cause of truth, who have worked for it and who have love in them even for opponents, who are free from animal passion, and who have abjured all earthly possessions and ambition. No one, therefore, may undertake, without the previous preparation and discipline, the fast that I have foreshadowed.

"Let there be no misunderstanding about the impending fast. I have no desire to die. I want to live for the cause, although I hope I am equally prepared to die for it. I need for me and for my fellow workers greater purity, greater application and dedication. I want more workers of unassailable purity. Shocking cases of impurity have

come under my notice. I would like my fast to be an urgent appeal to such people to leave the cause alone.

"I know that many of my sanatanist friends and others think that the movement is a deep political game. How I wish this fast would convince them that it is purely religious.

"If God has more service to take from this body, He will hold it together despite the deprivation of earthly food. He will send me spiritual food. But, He works through earthly agents and everyone who believes in the imperative necessity of removing untouchability will send me the food I need, by working to the best of his or her ability, for the due and complete fulfilment of the pledge given to Harijans in the name of Caste Hindus.

"Let co-workers not get agitated over the fast. They should feel strengthened by it. They must not abandon their post of duty, and those who have temporarily retired for rest or for being cured of ailments, are as much at the post as the healthy workers serving in their respective quarters. No one should come to me unless it be for consultation on matters connected with the movement.

"It is needless for me to pray of friends that they will not ask me to postpone, abandon or vary the approaching fast in any way whatsoever. I ask them to believe me that the fast has come to me literally as described above. I, therefore, ask friends in India and all the world over to pray for me, that I may safely pass through the ordeal and that whether I live or die, the cause for which the fast is to be undertaken may prosper. And, may I ask my sanatanist friends that whatever be the result of the fast for me, the lid that hides the truth may be removed."

On May 1, the Government of India received a telegram from Gandhi announcing that "for reasons wholly unconnected with the Government and solely connected with the Harijan movement, and in obedience to a peremptory call from within," he had decided to undertake a three weeks' fast commencing from May 8. "The fast might have commenced at once but for my being a prisoner and to avoid all possible embarrassment to the Government." Replying to the messages, Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* of May 5:

" General Smuts has made a pathetic appeal to me to desist from the impending fast. Dr. Ansari binds me with a tie of love capable of standing the severest strain. As an old friend and a fellow worker and as a medical man, he makes a pathetic appeal to me to vary my

vow. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, keeper of my conscience, sends me a long telegram attacking the very basis of the fast. Added to these, is the fervent and personal appeal strengthened by a copious flow of tears of Devadas, my youngest son and valued comrade.

"If these typical appeals have left me unmoved, the reader should have no difficulty in perceiving that there must be a force which has overpowered me and prevents me from responding to these and such other appeals. Underlying them is undoubtedly distrust of my claim that this fast was prompted by God. I do not suggest that they do not believe my word, but they believe me to be under a self-delusion, a prey to my own heated imagination made hotter by the suffocation produced by the cramping walls of the prison. I cannot deny the possibility of such a thing. But it can make no appeal to me whilst I believe to the contrary.

"I am a habitual prisoner. Prison walls have never known to have warped my judgement, nor induced in me the habit of brooding. All my imprisonments have been periods of intense activity, leaving no time for brooding. I have undoubtedly brooded over the wrongs done to the Harijans. But such brooding has always resulted in a definite exaction on my part.

"The action that I was contemplating on the day preceding that fateful night, was certainly not any fast. My claim to hear the voice of God is not new. Unfortunately, there is no way of proving my claim except through results. God will not be God, if he allowed himself to be the object of proof by His creatures. But He does give His willing slave power to pass through the fiercest of ordeals. I have been a willing slave to this most exacting Master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible as the years have rolled by. He has never forsaken me even in my darkest hour. And He has saved me often against myself and left me not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him, the greater has been my joy. I, therefore, feel quite confident that these kindest of friends will recognize the correctness of the action I am about to take now, and this whether I live or die. God's ways are inscrutable. And who knows, He may not want my death during the fast to be more fruitful of beneficent results than my life?

"Surely, it is depressing to think that man's ability to serve dies with the dissolution of body, which for the moment he is inhabiting. Who doubts that the spirits of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda,

Dayanand and Ramatirth, are working today among our midst? It may be that they are more potent today than when they were in our midst in flesh. It is not true that what good men do is oft buried with them. We burn the evil men do with their mortal remains. We treasure the memory of the good they do, and distance magnifies it. And why should exaggerated importance be given to the services of a single person, however good or able he may be?

"The cause of Harijans is God's cause. He will throw up men and women as they may be required to do His will. I feel sure, if I am wanted on this earth yet for a while, for any service whatsoever, He will spare me, notwithstanding the fears of medical friends."

Zero hour was fast approaching. Messages poured in. Mirabehn wrote: "Ba wishes to say, she is greatly shocked, feels the decision very wrong, but you have not listened to any others and so will not hear her. She sends her heart-felt prayers." Gandhi replied: "Tell Ba that her father imposed on her a companion whose weight would have killed any other woman. I treasure her love. She must remain courageous to the end."

"The 8th May on which you begin the fast is the sacred Nrisinha Jayanti day, on which Prahlad, having successfully gone through the terrible ordeals imposed on him, saw God Nrisinha face to face," wrote a devout Hindu. "God Nrisinha destroyed Hiranyakashipu that day. May God in the form of your penance, self-purification, destroy untouchability." A Muslim invalid wrote from a hospital in Calcutta: "Man is mortal and we have not been able to keep the prophets and sages alive for ever. We may not be able to save you but we can carry on your work in which you will live. May the compassionate God protect you." Some Harijans entreated him to go through the fast in their humble cottages. There were messages from several unknown people.

"What can I say about matters that I do not understand?" wrote Jawaharlal from prison. "I feel lost in a strange country where you are the only familiar landmark and I try to grope my way in dark. But I stumble. Whatever happens, my love and thoughts are with you." The first message from abroad was from Andrews: "Accepts and understands." Romain Rolland wrote, "Ever with you."

Tagore was disturbed: "It is not unlikely that you are mistaken about the imperative necessity of your present vow, and when we realize that there is a grave risk of its fatal termination, we shudder

at the possibility of the tremendous mistake never having the opportunity of being rectified. I cannot help beseeching you not to offer such an ultimatum of mortification to God for his scheme of things and almost refuse the gift of life with all its opportunities to hold up to its last moment the ideal of perfection which justifies humanity. My misgivings may be the outcome of a timidity of ignorance." Dr. Ansari wanted a promise from Gandhi to break his fast as and when medical advisers would regard his life in danger. In return, Gandhi wrote: "You are a man of faith. I want you to believe me when I say this fast is not of my will. It is God's peremptory command. He will be my invisible medical attendant and if His attendance does not save me, what will even a good physician and a descendant of those who helped the Prophet in the hour of his need do?"

On the eve of the fast, a Harijan student was announced in the evening. He had come some six months ago, asked for a scholarship and got the promise of help from Gandhi, if he brought a certificate from the principal of the college. This time he turned up with a certificate and was anxious for an assurance that Thakkar Bapa would look into his case and help him.

"Are you satisfied when I give you the assurance?" Gandhi said.

"No," said he, covering Gandhi's feet with flowers. "Why should I ask others? I have no faith in them. I have faith in you. Everyone else is insincere."

"But if all my associates are insincere," said Gandhi, "I must be the insincerest of them all. You had better not trust me either."

The student bursting into tears said: "Why, then, are you leaving us? You yourself say that your associates are impure and there is no purity around you and you must fast yourself to death."

"But why do you say I am leaving you. I am not."

"How can we believe it?" he said with an outburst of tears.

"I assure you, I am not going to die," said Gandhi. "Come along, we enter into a contract. On the noon of Monday, May 29, you come with an orange and I shall break my fast with its juice and then we shall talk about your scholarship. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes," he said with joy and went away.

Rajagopalachari and Shankarlal Banker insisted that he should get examined by doctors prior to the commencement of fast. Gandhi said: "I cannot agree to any medical examination, as that would be tantamount to a lack of faith on my part." Rajagopalachari said,

"You are then conceding nothing and claiming infallibility." This irritated Gandhi. He flared up saying, "You shall not thus undermine my conviction and my faith. I am confident that I am going to survive the ordeal. That should be enough for me and you, and as friends you ought not to weaken my faith. I cannot agree to any examination of me by doctors before the commencement of the fast." Later, he realized his mistake and said that he had done a great wrong to them. Next morning, he wrote a letter: "Your forgiveness I have before the asking. But I will do the very thing that I resisted like an ass. I will submit to examination now and any time you like by any doctor. I feel that the result of such examination should not be published for fear of political use being made of it. I must say, too, that the medical examination, if it comes, is not likely to affect the commencement of the fast."

A couple of hours before the commencement of the fast in the cause of the Harijans, Gandhi issued the following statement:

"Every day brings me fresh justification for the ordeal that God, the Truth, has sent me. The discoveries I am making would have paralysed me, but for the fast. Whatever it may mean for the cause, it will certainly be my saving. Whether I survive the fast or not, is a matter of little moment. Without it, I would in all probability have been useless for further service to Harijans, and for that matter any other service. Those friends who have sent me urgent wires to dissuade me from the step will, I hope, appreciate the fact that for a person built as I am, such fasts are indispensable. This I say, apart from my claim, by which I stand, that it was God's call. . .

"A telegram was received from the Harijan Association that my fast is unnecessary, as the Harijans stand not in need of assistance from Caste Hindus. From its own standpoint, the association is right. Only, it should be clearly understood that the fast is not to oblige Harijans, but for purification of self and associates. Harijan service is a duty the Caste Hindus owe to themselves. It is a part of the penance they must do for the wrongs done to their own kith and kin. Sanatanists scent further coercion in this fast. When they realize, that it cannot be broken before its period even if every temple was opened and untouchability was wholly removed, they perhaps will admit that it cannot be regarded as in any way coercive.

"The coming fast is intended to remove bitterness, to purify the hearts, and to make it clear that the movement is wholly moral to

be prosecuted by wholly moral persons. May God bless the ordeal and fulfil its purpose!"

On Monday, May 8, the fast commenced at twelve noon in the mango yard of Yeravda prison with prayers in which several ashram members and friends participated. Gandhi's feelings were tersely expressed in a letter to Mirabehn, written before the fast: "I want you to feel with me the fast is a gift greater than God has ever made to me. That, I approach it in fear and trembling is a sign of my weak faith. But this time there is in me a joy that I have not known before. I want you to share this joy with me."

At 9.30 p.m. on the 8th, a communique was issued: "In view of the nature and objects of the fast which Mr. Gandhi is undertaking and the attitude of mind which it discloses, the Government of India have decided that Mr. Gandhi should be set at liberty." Gandhi was informed about the Government's decision two hours in advance. He held his prayers with Sardar Patel, Mahadev Desai and Mrs. Naidu at nine and left the jail in a car for "Parnakuti", Lady Thackersy's house in Poona.

Simultaneously with his release, Gandhi announced suspension of the civil disobedience movement for a month, and he appealed to the Government to release all political prisoners and withdraw ordinances. He dictated his statement slowly and deliberately. Often he would pause for a few minutes together. After he had dictated the portion advocating the suspension, he stopped and turning to a press correspondent stated: "Now what I am going to say, I think, I should have the approval of the Congress President, Mr. Aney." The following statement was published after it was shown to and approved by the president:

"I cannot regard this release with any degree of pleasure. How can I take advantage of this release in order to prosecute the civil disobedience campaign or to guide it? This release puts upon me, as a seeker after truth and a man of honour, a tremendous burden and strain. This fast has to continue. I had hoped and still hope, not to excite myself over anything and not to take part in discussions of any nature whatsoever. The purpose of this fast will be frustrated, if I allowed my brain to be occupied by extraneous matter, that is, any matter outside the Harijan service. And at the same time, having been released, I should be bound to give a little of my energies to a study of the civil disobedience movement.

"Of course, for the moment, I can only say that my views about civil disobedience have undergone no change whatsoever. I have nothing but praise for the bravery and self-sacrifice of the numerous civil resisters, but having said that, I cannot help saying that the secrecy, that has attended the movement, is fatal to its success. If, therefore, the movement must be continued, I would urge those who are guiding the movement in different parts of the country to discard all secrecy. I do not care, if, thereby, it becomes difficult to secure a single civil resister.

"There can be no doubt that fear has seized the common mass. The ordinances have cowed them down, and I am inclined to think that the secret methods are largely responsible for the demoralization. The movement of civil disobedience does not depend so much upon the quantity as on the quality of men and women taking part in it, and if I was leading the movement, I should sacrifice quantity and insist on quality. If this could be done, it would raise the level of the movement immediately.

"I can say nothing as to the actual campaign. The reflections I have given, I had bottled up all these months. Whether I like it or not, during these three weeks all civil resisters will be in a state of terrible suspense. It would be better, if the Congress President declare suspension for one full month or even six weeks.

"Now, I would make an appeal to the Government. If they want real peace in the land and if they feel there is no real peace, if they feel that ordinance rule is no rule, they should take advantage of this suspension and unconditionally discharge all the civil resisters. If I survive the ordeal, it will give me time to survey the situation and to tender advice both to the Congressmen and if I may venture to do so, to the Government. I would like to take up the thread at the point where I was interrupted on my return from England.

"If no understanding is arrived at between the Government and the Congress, as a result of my effort, and civil disobedience is resumed, it will be open to the Government, if they so choose, to revive the ordinance rule.

"If there is will on the part of the Government, I have no doubt that a *modus operandi* can be found. Of this, so far as I am concerned, I am absolutely sure that civil disobedience cannot be withdrawn so long as so many civil resisters are imprisoned. No settlement can be arrived at so long as Sardar Vallabhbhai, Khan Abdul Ghaffar

Khan, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and others are buried alive. Indeed, to call off civil resistance is not within the power of any of the men who are out of prison. It is possible only for the Working Committee that was in existence at the time I was arrested.

"I shall say no more on the civil disobedience movement. Perhaps, I have already said too much, but if I was to say anything, I could say so only whilst I have strength left in me. I would urge pressmen not to worry me anymore. I would urge also would-be visitors once more to restrain themselves. Let them regard me as being still in prison. I shall be unfit for holding political discussions or any other discussions. I would like to be left in peace, and I would like to tell the Government that I shall not abuse the release. If I come safely through the ordeal and I find the political atmosphere as murky as it is today, without taking a single step secretly or openly in furtherance of civil disobedience, I shall invite them to take me back to Yeravda to companions, whom I almost seem to have deserted."

On May 9, Aney announced six weeks' suspension of the movement and appealed to the people to use this period in the service of the upliftment of Harijans. On the same day, the Government made their position clear in a communique, stating that the release of Gandhi had no connection with the Government's general policy: "A mere temporary suspension of civil disobedience movement, intended to lead up to negotiations with the Congress leaders, in no way fulfils the conditions, which would satisfy the Government of India that in fact civil disobedience movement has been definitely abandoned. There is no intention of negotiating with the Congress for a withdrawal of civil disobedience movement, or of releasing the leaders of that movement with a view to arriving at any settlement with them in regard to these unlawful activities."

Gandhi's decision was not palatable to many Congress leaders. From their retreat in Europe, Subhas Bose and Vithalbhai Patel denounced it: "The latest act of Mahatma Gandhi in suspending civil disobedience is a confession of failure. We are of opinion that the Mahatma as a political leader has failed. The time has come for a radical reorganization of the Congress on new principles with a new method for which a new leader is essential, as it is unfair to expect the Mahatma to work a programme not consistent with his lifelong principles." To many Congressmen, the suspension of the movement in favour of Harijan work, came as a great shock. They

regarded the removal of untouchability as subsidiary to the main struggle in which tens of thousands had suffered.

In a short note, on May 13, Gandhi said: "All should know that even though I am supposed to be a free man, *Harijan* will continue to be edited as if I was in prison. It will still be solely devoted to the Harijan cause and will scrupulously exclude all politics. It is a matter of regret to me that for three weeks I shall not be able to write anything for it. But if God spares me, I hope to write for it with better qualifications. I hope, further, that in the meanwhile the Harijan cause will make rapid progress, that the reformers and sanatanists will combine, wherever possible, to serve Harijans, that reformers will work the rest of the programme without wounding the susceptibilities of the sanatanists and that the Harijans themselves will, by vigorously prosecuting internal reforms, make it easier for sanatanists and reformers to recognize that the Harijans are truly 'Harijans' and that they are capable of responding to love precisely in the same manner and to the same degree as others."

Rolland wrote to Gandhi: "We are with you in these grave days when your life is again at stake. We send forth our fervent prayers that the hardness of heart of those of your people who obstruct the great work of national reparation to the untouchables gives way; that they should tremble to assume before history the execrable responsibility of having caused your death. They will, in the memory of all men of the future, always carry the mark on their forehead. But please permit me to attach to your sacrifice a larger meaning yet, than that for the cause of the untouchables. In these tragic times, when the whole world is given over to the most atrocious violence—on the eve of the world wars which in their amplitude and cruelty will overshadow those of the past—when the whole of the humanity is divided between the oppressors and the oppressed—and when the latter, ground down by their sufferings and injustice, as if made drunk by the violence which makes martyrs of them see before them no help except in violence—your immolation before the Goddess of Justice, who is all love and without violence, acquires a universal and sacred value—like the Cross. If the Cross has not—alas—saved the world, it has shown to the world the way to save itself; it has illumined with its light the night of millions of unfortunates."

The fast went well. On the morning of May 28, before beginning his weekly silence, at half past eleven, Gandhi summoned Mahadev

and said: "Better fix up the plan for tomorrow. Dr. Ansari will, read something from the Koran, we might have a Christian hymn and then our song of the true Vaishnava." "We have fixed it all up," said Mahadev. "We shall begin the prayers at half past eleven and finish everything by twelve when you will break your fast. "No," said Gandhi, "the prayers cannot begin at that hour and I cannot break the fast until after thanksgiving." Kasturbai put in: "That will delay the breaking of the fast." "No," repeated Gandhi, "nothing until after the prayers which should begin at twelve, when the vow was taken." Mahadev was summoned again in the evening to receive written instructions: "Mahadev had suggested *Ishopanishad* for tomorrow. No, I think the verse in our hymn-book containing the words *Siddho tha Buddho tha va* should be sung. Then the poet's song should be sung, either by his secretary or by Mahadev."

On May 29, Gandhi was expecting the Harijan student with an orange but he did not turn up. He felt that he was too humble to be admitted to the function. By twelve noon the prayers were over. But, before taking the orange juice, Gandhi dictated to Mahadev a brief note to be read to the assembled: "Within a minute or two I am going to break the fast. In His name and with faith in Him was it taken, in His name it terminates. My faith is not less today. You will not expect me to make a speech on this occasion. It is an occasion for taking the name and singing the glory of God. But I may not forget the doctors and friends who have poured their affection on me during these days of privilege and grace. I am glad that Harijans are here with us today. I do not know exactly what work God expects from me now. But whatever it may be, I know that He will give me strength for it."

Free Again

1933

In June 1933, while Gandhi was still too weak to resume his usual activities, an inter-communal marriage was performed between his son Devadas and Laxmi, daughter of Rajagopalachari. Addressing the bride and bridegroom, Gandhi said:

"If you try to live as true Vaishnavas, as described in the hymn of Narasinha Mehta, which you have just heard, I assure you that all the objections raised against this match will melt away. Since I reached the age of discretion, I have tried to understand the meaning of *dharma* and to live up to it to the utmost of my capacity. I do not feel that in celebrating this marriage, we do anything against the dictates of *dharma*. Had it been so, you should not have had my presence at the ceremony and my blessings."

As soon as Gandhi had sufficiently recovered, an informal meeting of the leading Congressmen, who were still at liberty, was convened in Poona, from the 12th to 14th of July. About 150 delegates from different provinces had arrived to decide the line of future action. The press was kept out of it. Gandhi, at the outset, stated that the necessity for calling the conference had arisen not because circumstances had altered, or that the Government had offered terms, but because of the peculiar circumstances created by his fast and his consequent release. He requested the delegates to express their views freely and frankly. After Gandhi's short speech, some of those who held the view that there should be a change in the policy of the Congress were the first to address the conference. Except for one or two, the rest of the speakers among whom was Satyamurty were unanimous in their opinion that civil disobedience should be called off and that it should be done without regard to what the Government may or may not do regarding the question of the release of the political prisoners. Seventeen delegates addressed the gathering on the first day. On the second day, most of the delegates, prominent

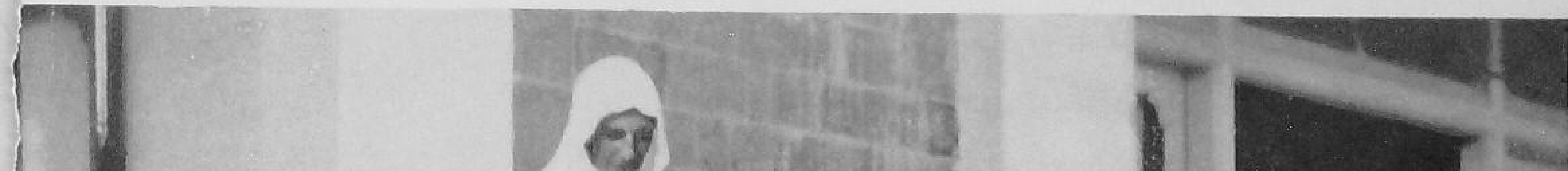
among whom was Kripalani, opposed the withdrawal of the movement. On the third day, the session opened with Gandhi's speech lasting for eighty minutes. He dealt with all the points raised by the speakers and placed before them his suggestions. Of the three resolutions put to the meeting, the first, in favour of unconditional withdrawal of civil disobedience, was rejected; the second resolution, in favour of the adoption of individual civil disobedience was defeated; and the third, authorizing Gandhi to seek an unconditional interview with the Viceroy was passed.

On July 15, Gandhi telegraphed to Lord Willingdon asking for an interview with a view to exploring the possibilities of peace. The Viceroy, in reply, referred to newspaper reports regarding the conference and he declined to grant an interview, unless the Congress first withdrew the civil disobedience movement. Simultaneously, Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State, in the House of Commons, announced: "We have said that we are not prepared to negotiate, and we shall maintain that position. Mr. Gandhi wishes to put himself in the position of a negotiator with the Government of India and also carries in reserve the unconditional weapon of civil disobedience. I repeat that there can be no question of making a bargain with the Congress as a condition for their accepting the ordinary obligations of law-abiding citizens."

On July 17, Gandhi sent another telegram to the Viceroy, expressing his "painful surprise" over the refusal of the interview. "I had not expected that the Government would take the official notice of unauthorized publications of confidential proceedings of an informal conference, and on the basis thereof, reject the request for an interview. If the interview were granted, I could show that the proceedings taken as a whole, were calculated to bring about an honourable peace. The conference was undoubtedly favourable to peace, if it can be obtained without humiliation.

"If the Government hold they cannot have any conversation even for promoting peace, with a representative of an association engaged in activities in breach of state laws, however repressive they may be, until that association first discontinues activities, which it believes to be in pursuance of the inherent right belonging to every human family, I can have nothing to say.

"Nevertheless I would like to add a personal note. My life is regulated by peaceful motives. I hanker after reasonable peace, but I must

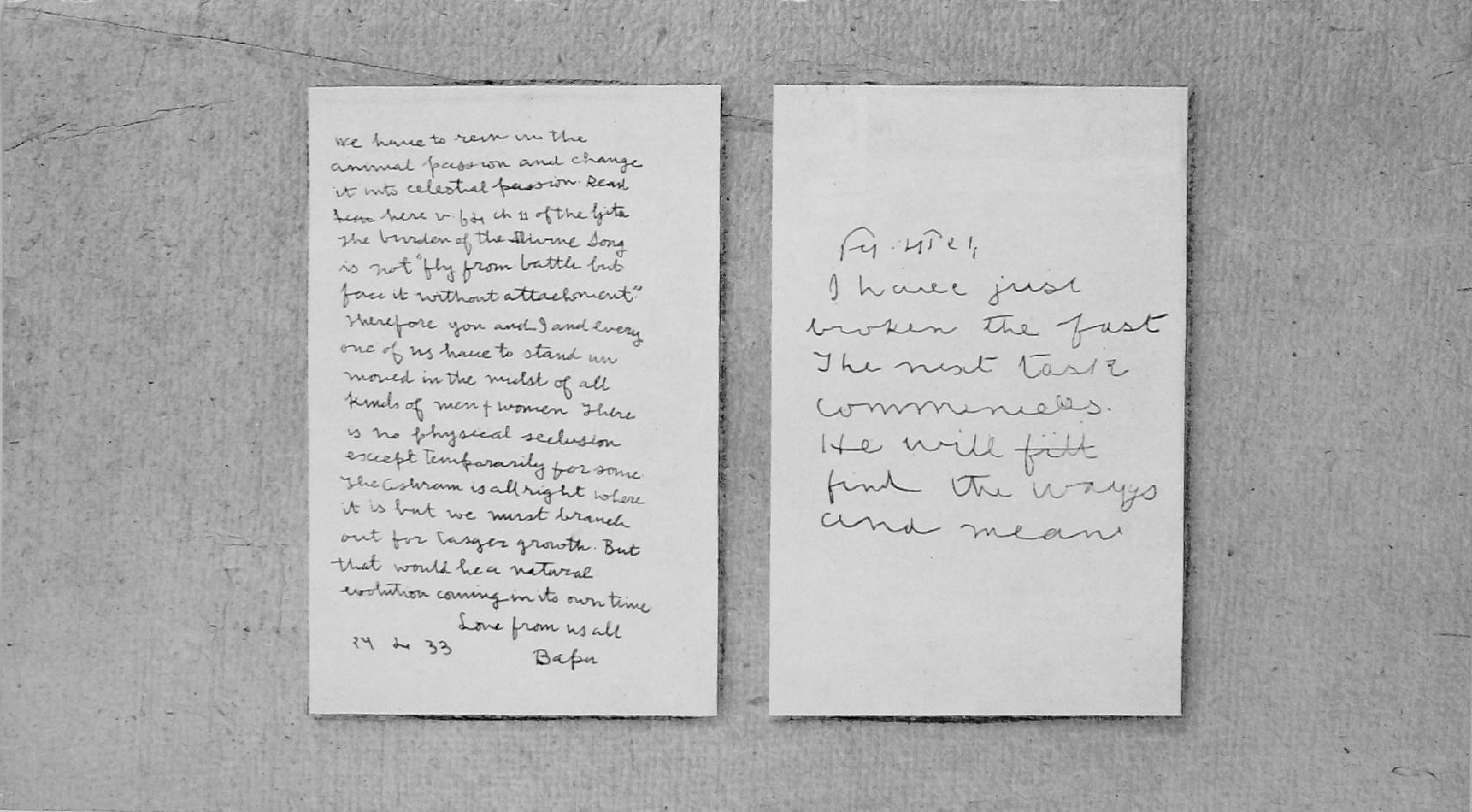


Courtesy : U. M. D. Thackersy

Gandhi during the 21-day fast at Parnakuti, Poona, May 1933
With C. F. Andrews at Parnakuti, May 1933

Courtesy : U. M. D. Thackersy

Gandhi taking his meals during the convalescence, June 1933
Leaving Parnakuti for a conference for the first time after the fast, June 1933


we have to rein in the animal passion and change it into celestial passion. Read here v. 55 ch 11 of the Gita. The burden of the Divine Song is not "fly from battle but face it without attachment". Therefore you and I and every one of us have to stand unmoved in the midst of all kinds of men & women. There is no physical seclusion except temporarily for some. The Ashram is all right where it is but we must branch out for larger growth. But that would be a natural evolution coming in its own time.

Love from us all

24-4-33

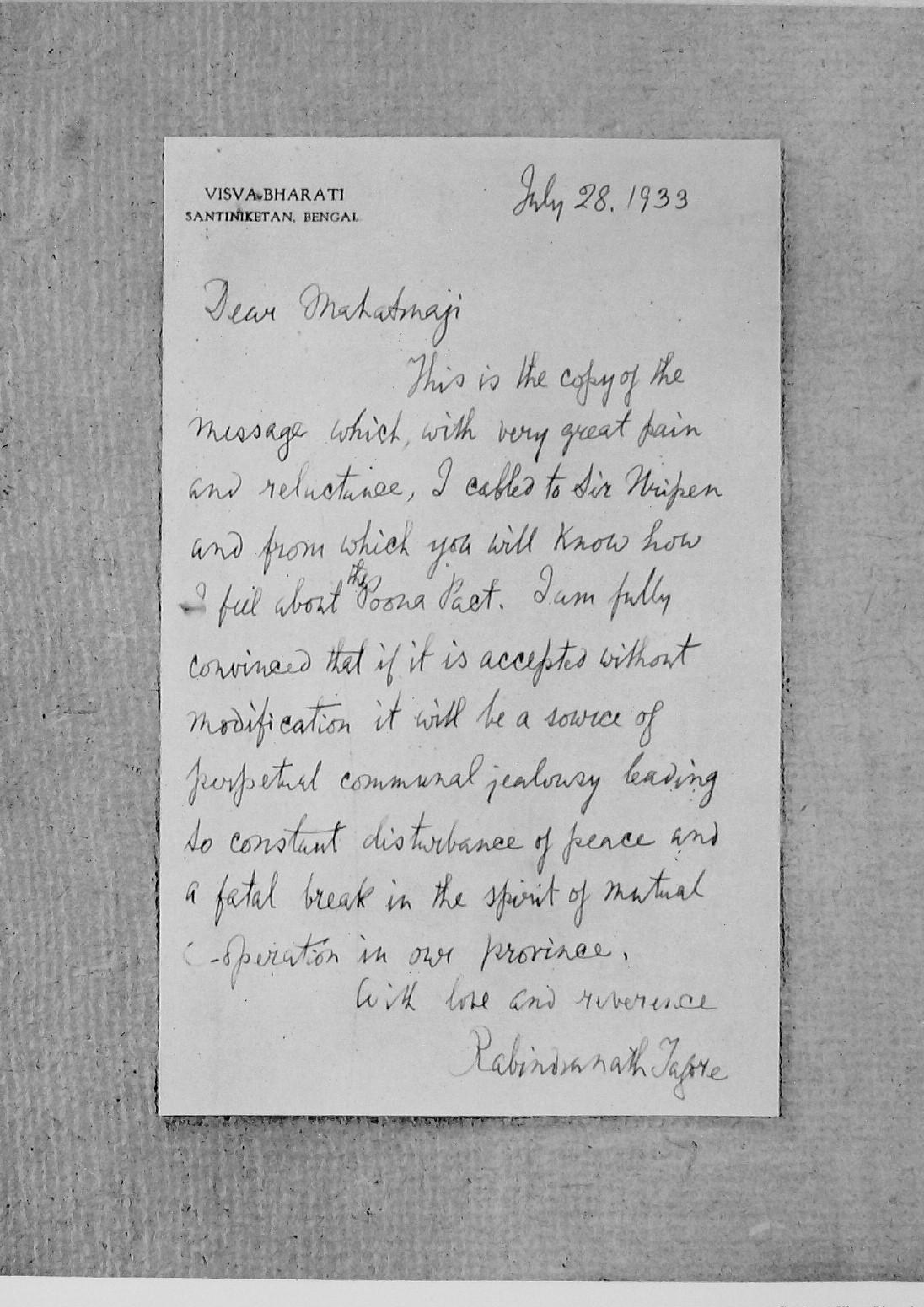
Bapu

चि. मीरा,

I have just broken the fast. The next task commences. He will ~~fill~~ find the ways and mean

Courtesy : Navajivan Trust

Gandhi's letters to Mirabehn, dated Poona, April 24 and May 29, 1933


VISVA-BHARATI
SANTINIKETAN, BENGAL

July 28. 1933

Dear Mahatmaji

This is the copy of the message which, with very great pain and reluctance, I cabled to Sir Nripen and from which you will know how I feel about the Poona Pact. I am fully convinced that if it is accepted without modification it will be a source of perpetual communal jealousy leading to constant disturbance of peace and a fatal break in the spirit of mutual co-operation in our province.

With love and reverence

Rabindranath Tagore

Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Tagore's letter to Gandhi, dated July 28, 1933

(True Copy).

"UTTARAYAN"
SANTINIKETAN, BENGAL

Cable sent to Sir Nripendranath Sircar.

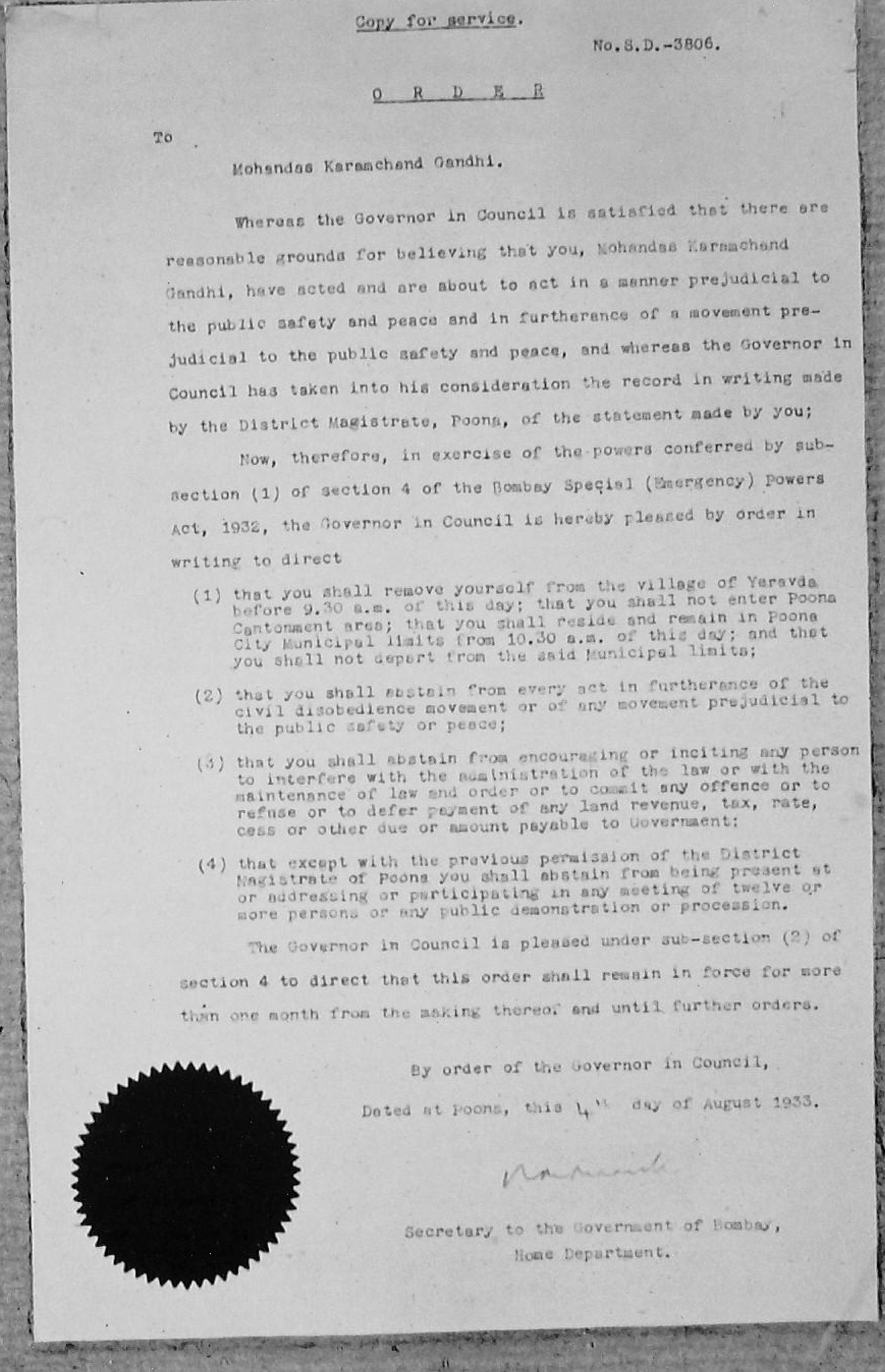
I remember to have sent a cable to the Prime Minister requesting him not to delay in accepting the proposal about communal awards submitted to him by Mahatmaji. At that moment a situation had been created which was extremely painful not affording us the least time or peace of mind to enable us to think quietly about the possible consequences of the Poona Pact which had been effected before my arrival, when Sapru and Jayakar had already left, with the help of members among whom there was not a single responsible representative from Bengal. Upon the immediate settlement of this question Mahatmaji's life depended and the intolerable anxiety caused by such a crisis drove me precipitately to a commitment which I now realise as a wrong done against our country's permanent interest. Never having experience in political dealings while entertaining a great love for Mahatmaji and a complete faith in his wisdom in Indian politics I dared not wait for further consideration not heeding that justice had been sacrificed in case of Bengal. I have not the least doubt now that such an injustice will continue to cause mischief for all parties concerned keeping alive the spirit of communal conflict in our province in an intense form making peaceful government perpetually difficult. That the ministers of the British Government should brusquely refuse to reconsider this subject of a vital importance to us while all other proposals contained in the White Paper are being freely rehandled does not surprise or hurt me too much for have they not often exultingly prophesied of the evil days when we might be left to fight the fratricidal turbulence without their aid and fail, and naturally they may lack today enthusiasm to help us in making our path too smooth towards communal reconciliation, but that the Indian members of the Conference belonging to provinces other than ours should not only remain apathetic but actively take part in aggravating Bengal's misfortune is terribly ominous presaging no good for our future history.

Rabindranath Tagore.

Santiniketan.

Courtesy: Visva-Bharati

A copy of Tagore's cable to Nripendranath Sarkar sent to Gandhi along his letter dated July 28, 1933



Copy for service.

No.S.D.-3806.

O R D E R

To

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Whereas the Governor in Council is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that you, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, have acted and are about to act in a manner prejudicial to the public safety and peace and in furtherance of a movement prejudicial to the public safety and peace, and whereas the Governor in Council has taken into his consideration the record in writing made by the District Magistrate, Poona, of the statement made by you;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 4 of the Bombay Special (Emergency) Powers Act, 1932, the Governor in Council is hereby pleased by order in writing to direct

(1) that you shall remove yourself from the village of Yeravda before 9.30 a.m. of this day; that you shall not enter Poona Cantonment area; that you shall reside and remain in Poona City Municipal limits from 10.30 a.m. of this day; and that you shall not depart from the said Municipal limits;

(2) that you shall abstain from every act in furtherance of the civil disobedience movement or of any movement prejudicial to the public safety or peace;

(3) that you shall abstain from encouraging or inciting any person to interfere with the administration of the law or with the maintenance of law and order or to commit any offence or to refuse or to defer payment of any land revenue, tax, rate, cess or other due or amount payable to Government;

(4) that except with the previous permission of the District Magistrate of Poona you shall abstain from being present at or addressing or participating in any meeting of twelve or more persons or any public demonstration or procession.

The Governor in Council is pleased under sub-section (2) of section 4 to direct that this order shall remain in force for more than one month from the making thereof and until further orders.

By order of the Governor in Council,

Dated at Poona, this 4th day of August 1933.

Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department.

Courtesy: Babubhai Asher

Bombay Government's restraint order served on Gandhi, dated Poona, August 4, 1933

confess that I cannot be satisfied with any makeshift. If I resort to non-co-operation or civil disobedience, it is for establishing true and voluntary co-operation, and obedience to laws in the place of forced co-operation and forced obedience. I, therefore, hope my request for an interview will be granted."

The private secretary to the Viceroy replied: "His Excellency had held that civil disobedience is a movement intended to coerce the Government by means of unlawful activities, and that there can be no question of holding conversation with a representative of an association which has not abandoned that movement."

Gandhi's efforts at peace having failed, it was decided to continue the struggle in another form: "All those who are able and willing to offer individual civil disobedience on their own responsibilities, without expectation of any assistance from the Congress organizations, are expected to do so." Under the orders of the president, Mr. Aney, all the Congress organizations and war councils ceased to function in view of the suspension of mass civil disobedience. The Congressmen were expected to carry on such constructive activities as they were fitted for. There was passive opposition to the new policy. During the eighteen months that the mass movement lasted, 100,000 people were imprisoned.

On July 26, Gandhi commented on Aney's statement: "I do fully admit the purity of purpose and great cleverness of the workers in conducting a campaign by secret methods devised to meet the situation created by the repressive measures of the Government, but the secrecy is repugnant to satyagraha and hampers its progress. It has undoubtedly contributed, in a very great measure, to the present demoralization of the people. I know that the ban on secrecy will stop some of the activities which appeared to keep the Congress before the public eye, but this doubtful benefit will be outweighed by the elimination of a method which is foreign to the spirit of satyagraha and which interferes with its efficacy.

"Another change made is the stoppage of the mass movement. The masses have acted bravely and suffered much, wherever they have responded to the national call, but ample evidence is now forthcoming to show that they are not able any longer to suffer the prolonged torture of the ordinance rule, now crystallized into statute by the so-called legislatures. The Congress, as an organization, finds it increasingly difficult, day by day, to render them effective aid, the

stoppage of which would prevent even the little relief that it was possible to give them. The masses have not yet learnt to act as one man and without direction. They need more experience and training, through the example of individuals.

"It may be objected that the heroic suffering of a few individuals, however praiseworthy in itself, is of no practical value and cannot affect the British policy. I differ from such a view. In my opinion, the seemingly long or almost interminable process adumbrated by me will, in practice, be found to be the shortest, for I hold that true independence in terms of and on behalf of the masses, can be proved in India's case to be unattainable by any other method than non-violence, which is an integral part of the Congress constitution and which demands the course suggested by me."

Asked about what would happen to the Harijan movement, he said: "Many people had expected that I would devote the whole of my time to the Harijan movement. These do not understand me. In the first instance, my life is not divided into watertight compartments. It is one indivisible whole and, therefore, I could not possibly give up the activities of a lifetime, which are as dear to me as the Harijan movement itself. And my activities react upon one another. Therefore, if I excluded other activities, my Harijan service will itself suffer. Then, again, I could not, all the twenty-four hours of the day, be doing Harijan work only. That is an impossible thing; and if it was suggested that I should give up prison life, which the civil disobedience movement implied, for the sake of Harijan work, it means that I should give up a life principle. Therefore, I can only render this service to the best of my ability and consistently with the principles that govern my life."

On July 26, Gandhi announced from Ahmedabad his intention to disband Sabarmati ashram which had been in existence for eighteen years. "The disbandment of the ashram," he stated, "would mean that every inmate of it would constitute a walking ashram, carrying with him or her the responsibility for realizing the ashram ideal, no matter where situated, whether in prison or outside." In a letter to the Bombay Government, he suggested that the Government take possession of the ashram and do what they liked with it:

"The ashram has 107 inmates at present—men 42 and women 31, boys 12 and girls 22. The number excludes those who are in prison, and those who are otherwise outside. Up to now it has trained nearly

a thousand persons in manufacturing khadi. Most of these, so far as my knowledge goes, are doing useful constructive work, and are earning an honest livelihood. The ashram is registered. The trust funds at its disposal are earmarked. It owns immovable property estimated at over Rs. 3,50,000, and movables, including cash, estimated at over Rs. 3,00,000. The ashram takes no part in politics so called."

Gandhi thought that the time had come now when the constructive programme of the ashram could not be carried on with safety unless the ashram ceased to have anything to do with the campaign. "To accept such a position," he said, "will be to deny its creed. Up to now, I had hoped that the existence of the ashram side by side with civil resistance of its individual members was possible, and that there was bound to be honourable peace between the Government and the Congress in the near future, even though the Congress goal might not be immediately realized. But the unfortunate rejection by the Viceroy of the honest advance of the Congress, through me, in the interest of peace, shows clearly that the Government do not seek or desire peace. They want abject surrender by the largest and the most, if not the only, popular political organization in the country. This is impossible so long as the Congress continues to repose confidence in its present advisers.

"It follows that the greatest measure of sacrifice is to be expected of me as the author of this movement. I can, therefore, offer that which is nearest and dearest to me, and for building up of which I and many other members of the ashram have laboured with infinite patience and care, all these eighteen years. Every head of cattle and every tree has its history and sacred association. They are members of a family. What was once a barren plot of land has been turned by human endeavour into a fair-sized model garden colony. It will not be without a tear that we shall break up the family and its various activities. I have had many and prayerful conversations with the inmates, and they have, men and women, unanimously approved of the proposal to give up the present activities.

"The ashram has for the past two years refused to pay revenue dues, and consequently goods of considerable value have been seized and sold in respect of them. I make no complaint against the procedure, but it cannot be a matter of pleasure or profit to carry on a great institution in such precarious circumstances. I fully realize that whether the state is just or unjust, and whether it is under popular

or foreign control, the citizen's possessions may at a time be forcibly taken away from him by the state, if it comes into conflict with it. In the circumstances, it seems to me to be simple prudence to anticipate the inevitable.

"But whilst it had been decided to break up the ashram, we want everything to be used for public purposes. Unless the Government for any reason desire to take charge of any or all the movables including the cash, I propose to hand them over to those friends who will take them, and use them for public benefit and in accordance with the earmarking. Thus, the khadi stock and the contents of the workshop and the weaving sheds will be handed over to All-India Spinners' Association on whose behalf that activity has been carried on. Cows and other cattle will be handed over to the representatives of the Goseva Sangh, on whose behalf the dairy has been conducted. The library will be handed over probably to an institution that will take care of it. Monies and articles belonging to the various parties will be returned to them or kept for them by friends who will care to take charge of them.

"Then, there remained the land, buildings and crops. I suggest that the Government take possession of these and do what they like with them. I would gladly have handed these to friends, but I cannot be a party to their paying revenue dues and naturally I may not hand them to fellow resisters. All, therefore, I wish is that beneficial use be made of the land, buildings and valuable trees and crops, instead of the same being allowed to run to waste, as has been done in many cases. There is a plot of land with buildings occupied by the Harijan families. They have hitherto paid no rent. I have no desire to invite them to take part in civil resistance. They will now pay a nominal rent of one rupee per year to the trustees of the ashram, and be responsible for the revenue due on that portion.

"If, for any reason, the Government decline to take possession of the said property, the ashram will still be vacated by the inmates, as soon as may be, after the expiry of the suspension period, the 31st instant. Unless the date is anticipated by the Government, I request a telegraphic reply to this letter, at least in so far as the Government's wishes regarding the movables are concerned, so as to enable me to remove them in time, if I am to remove them at all."

In the course of an appeal addressed to the people of Gujarat, he said: "On Tuesday morning, 31st of July, I propose, God willing,

to march from the ashram with thirty-three companions. Some of these will be even physically weaker than I, for there are nearly as many women with me this time as men, but I could not resist their desire to sacrifice themselves. We hope and pray that God will help us to carry out our pledge.

"Our immediate destination now is Ras. In case we are allowed to reach there, we shall proceed further, but it is quite likely that we all will be arrested as we proceed on the march. If we are not so arrested, it is our plan to convey the message of fearlessness to every village home.

"Let me set out in brief, what we shall expect of the villages we visit. We will not have a copper on us. We shall very cheerfully and thankfully accept what the poor villagers offer us. The coarsest fare, willingly served, will mean to us the choicest treat. As this is rainy season, we shall be thankful to be put up in a cottage having a roof and we shall march by easy stages. As many amongst us are not strong and our programme will not be rigid, we shall halt whenever our legs cannot carry us any further. But we do not propose to spend more than a single night at one place.

"It is possible that the Government may take me before Tuesday. Even then the march will continue, so long as there is any marcher left free. I am confident that if the sacrifice that we are offering is pure, it will generate non-violence that will put us in reach of the swaraj that millions of us are pining for."

On August 1, Gandhi, Kasturbai, Mahadev Desai, and thirty inmates of the ashram, were arrested and taken to the Sabarmati jail. A communique stated: "Mr. Gandhi has recently engaged himself in active incitements to continuance and intensification of civil disobedience through the action of individuals."

From Sabarmati, Gandhi was removed to Yeravda prison. He was released on August 4, after being served with a restraint order, requiring him to reside within the limits of Poona city. But on indicating his intention of disobeying the order, he was arrested again, tried in the Yeravda prison, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. In the statement made in the court, Gandhi observed that it was with him a painful duty to break the orders of a constituted authority. His brief spell of freedom had shown him the prevailing atmosphere of fear and demoralization in the country which affected everybody, and being a confirmed believer in non-violence, he sought to take a

shelter under self-suffering. When asked about his occupation by the magistrate, he replied that he was "a spinner, weaver and farmer". His residence, he added, was "Yeravda jail now".

Following his imprisonment, the campaign of individual civil disobedience started in all provinces. The acting president, Aney, with thirteen companions, was arrested on August 14, while starting on a march from Akola. In the first week, hundreds of Congress workers offered individual satyagraha and they were jailed.

Now that Gandhi was a convicted prisoner, the Government refused to renew the privileges to continue Harijan work, which they had granted to him as a detenu. He demanded the same facilities for promoting the Harijan cause, as he had been allowed to enjoy on the previous occasion. On August 14 he addressed a letter to the Government of Bombay: "The strain of deprivation of Harijan work is becoming unbearable. If, therefore, I cannot have permission by noon of next Wednesday, I must deny myself all nourishment save salt and water. Life ceases to interest me, if I may not do Harijan work without let or hindrance. As I have made it clear in my previous correspondence and as the Government of India have admitted, the permission to render that service is implied in the Yeravda pact, to which the British Government is a consenting party, in so far as its consent was necessary. Therefore, I do, indeed, want permission, but only if the Government believe that justice demands it and not because I propose to deprive myself of food, if it is not granted. That deprivation is intended purely for my consolation."

On August 16, Gandhi was informed that he would be allowed the following facilities for purposes of work strictly confined to anti-untouchability: (1) To receive newspapers and periodicals, but not to be allowed interviews for publication in the press, whether with press correspondents or other; (2) to see not more than two visitors a day; (3) to send instructions or contributions to the *Harijan* editor three times a week, and a limited number of letters to other correspondents; (4) to have at his disposal a convict typist, and books and newspapers, needed for Harijan work.

Gandhi at first indicated that he would not fast. Later, he wrote the following letter to the jail superintendent:

"I see that I have hastily and stupidly told you to restore goat's milk to me. It shows how disinclined I am to starve. But on reading the notes of the orders you have left with me, I find they are so far

short of the original orders of the Government of India and of my requirements that I must not be precipitated in breaking my fast. If the Government intend to go back upon these orders, I shall be sorry. But I may not work under the new orders which seem to me to be grudgingly given.

"It pains me to have to write this letter, but it will give me much greater pain, if I break the fast now, and have to enter upon a prolonged controversy with the Government on many matters that need elucidation. I miss the Government's response to the meticulous care with which I am endeavouring to observe the jail discipline and as a prisoner to give co-operation, which, as a citizen outside the prison walls, I consider it a religious duty to withhold.

"I have read your note three times and each reading has increased my grief to discover that the Government cannot appreciate the desperate need there is for me to do Harijan service without let or hindrance. Much, therefore, as I am disinclined to continue the fast, I feel that I must go through the agony if I cannot serve the Harijan cause without the tremendous handicap which it seems to me the orders conveyed by you put upon it. Will you, therefore, withdraw the milk and fruit already received by me and accept my apology for having told you that I would break the fast?"

On August 16, Gandhi commenced a fast "unto death". Two days later the Government issued a communique:

"The Government are not aware what Mr. Gandhi means by saying that they have admitted that permission to do Harijan work in prison is implied in the Yeravda pact, though it is true that in the exceptional circumstances, prevailing immediately after that pact, the Government did permit Mr. Gandhi as a state prisoner to inaugurate the movement to which he seemed to be devoting his whole attention. Protests were made at the time on behalf of the orthodox Hindu community who did not agree with Mr. Gandhi's policy in this matter against his being allowed facilities to conduct a public campaign from jail, and it might well be argued that Mr. Gandhi having now after a period of freedom courted imprisonment again on a purely political issue should not be allowed any special treatment that is not given to other 'A' class prisoners.

"Nevertheless, the Government have been reluctant to take action which could be regarded as unreasonable interference with the work of social reform, or to take their stand too rigidly on the fact that

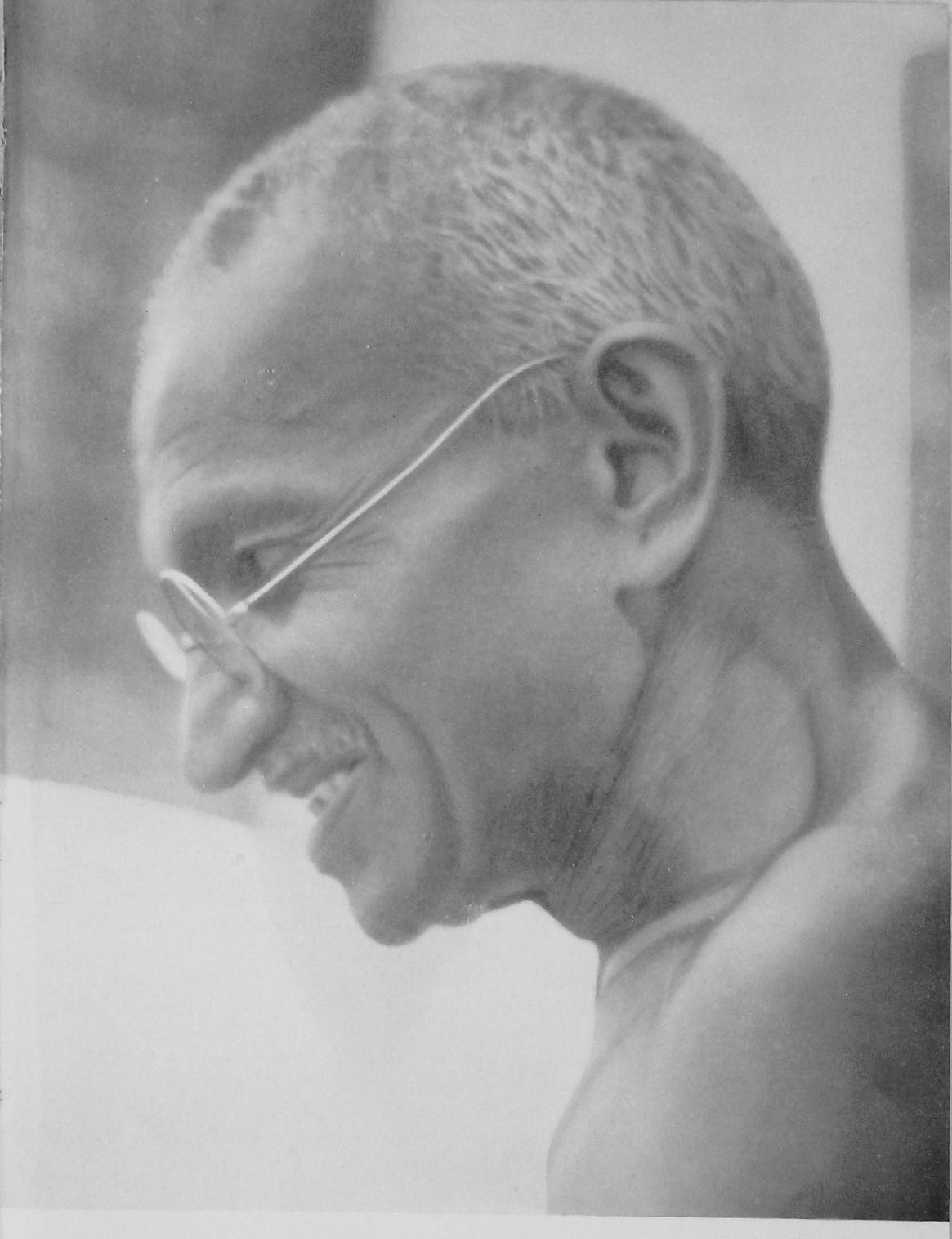
Mr. Gandhi is by his deliberate act a prisoner convicted for breach of the law. In spite of the inconvenience to jail discipline and the anomaly of the position, they have allowed Mr. Gandhi the facilities for pursuing his anti-untouchability work, which will enable him to make an important and effective contribution towards it.

"It was noticeable that when Mr. Gandhi was at liberty, he did not appear to devote the major part of his time or attention to this movement. His main energies were employed on politics and on the continuance, in whatever form it might be possible, of the movement of civil disobedience. His present claim, that he should be allowed from prison to carry on his Harijan work 'without let or hindrance', amounts to a refusal to accept for himself the normal concomitants of imprisonment, except restriction on his actual physical liberty, and in effect is a claim to dictate the terms of his imprisonment.

"The Government are satisfied that the facilities they have allowed are ample to enable Mr. Gandhi to conduct such work in favour of the removal of untouchability as is, in the circumstances, reasonable. If Mr. Gandhi now feels, however, that life ceases to interest him if he may not do Harijan work without let or hindrance, the Government are prepared, provided Mr. Gandhi is willing to abandon all civil disobedience activities and incitements, to set him at liberty at once so that he can devote himself wholly and without restriction to the cause of social reform."

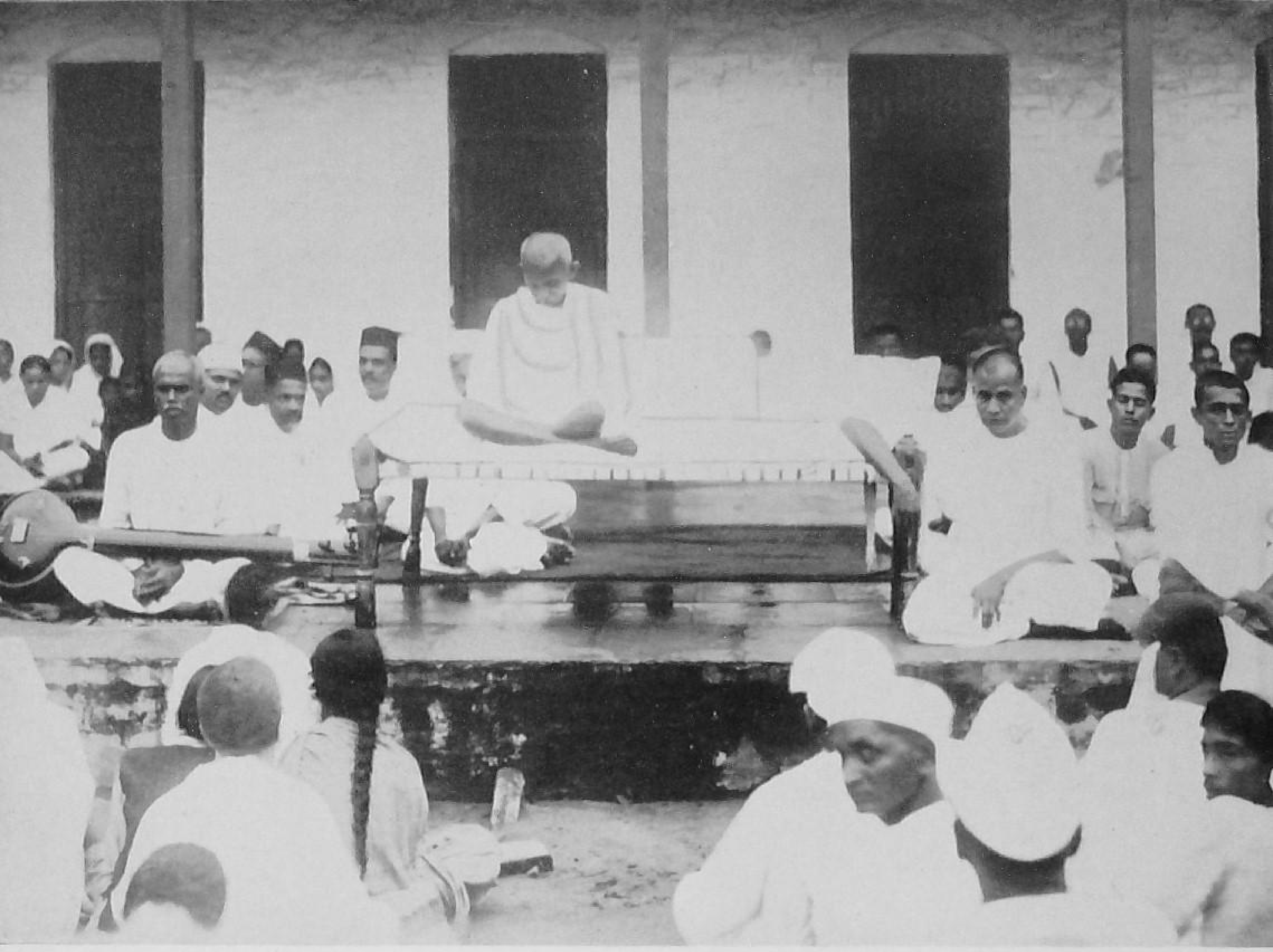
Gandhi declined the offer of a conditional release. On August 21, he was removed to the Sassoon Hospital, still a prisoner. His health deteriorated rapidly and he lost the will to live. The end appeared to be near and he made dispositions about the few personal articles that were lying about him, giving some to the nurses. On August 23, when he was considered to have entered the danger zone, he was released unconditionally. Before leaving the hospital, Gandhi said his prayers and broke his fast with a glass of orange juice. He was then taken to "Parnakuti" in an ambulance car.

The unexpected development put Gandhi in a most embarrassing position. "This discharge is a matter of no joy to me," he said. "It is a matter of shame that I took my comrades to prison and came out of it by fasting." In a short note, in *Harijan* dated August 26, he wrote: "God's ways are unscrutable. The most unexpected event of my life has now happened. I have been used to the most unexpected things in the course of a very long public life, but this is the most



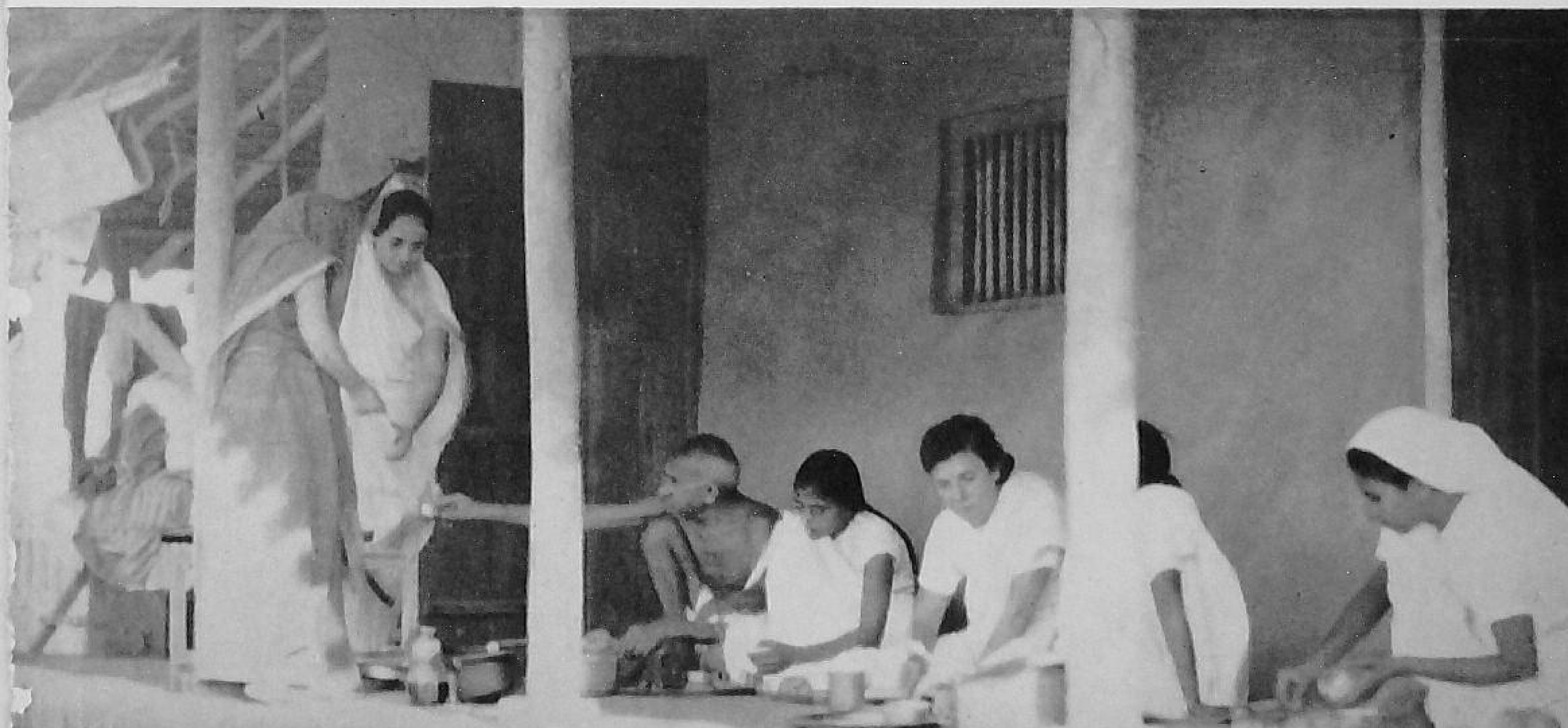
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi, aged 64



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi's last prayer at Sabarmati Ashram when he announced disbandment of the ashram, July 26, 1933



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On his daily walk at Wardha, November 1933
At the meals at Satyagraha Ashram, Wardha, November 1933

Photograph : M. Desai

Gandhi, Wardha, November 1933

unexpected of all. What is now in store for me? How shall I use this life out of prison I do not know. But, I may say this that whether in prison or outside prison, Harijan service will be always after my heart and will be the breath of life for me, more precious than the daily bread."

Jawaharlal Nehru was now at liberty and came to see Gandhi at Poona. It was more than two years since they had been together and they discussed matters at length. The prolonged discussion between them aroused great public interest and the essential points of their conversations were embodied in an exchange of letters, known as the Poona statements, published in September. The central idea running through their correspondence was that the economic programme of the Congress, particularly as expressed in the enunciation of the Fundamental Rights at the Karachi Congress, should be stressed. Gandhi wrote: "I have no doubt that our goal can be no less than Complete Independence. I am also in whole-hearted agreement with you, when you say that without a material revision of the vested interests the condition of the masses can never be improved." Nehru wanted Gandhi to define clearly his political objective, for as he said, only a truly inspiring political ideal could enlist the support of the masses in the national struggle. In reply, Gandhi wrote that once having fixed the goal, he was not interested in its repetition, but only in devising the means of its progressive realization. That goal was set forth in *Hind Swaraj*, as an exploitation-free society in which the supreme instrument of defending just rights lay within the grasp of the common unarmed individual. Gandhi added: "But I know that though there is such an agreement between you and me in the enunciation of the ideals, there are temperamental differences between you and me. I have concerned myself more with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. If we can take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured. I feel that our progress towards the goal will be, in exact proportion to the purity of our means." As regards Aney's decision, he observed: "The movement would have collapsed through the growing internal weakness but for those instructions, for the Congressmen were deluding themselves into the belief that there were organizations effectively functioning to which they could look for guidance." He concluded: "I have no sense of defeat in me and the hope in me that our country is fast marching towards its goal is burning as bright as it did in 1920."

On September 14, Gandhi announced his abstention from civil disobedience till August 3. He wrote:

"As a rule, during my long course of public service, the next moment's step has been clear before me, but since my unexpected release from prison, on 23rd August last, darkness has surrounded me. The path of duty has not been clear to me. My present state of health is such that it may yet take several weeks for me to regain the lost strength. To seek imprisonment as soon as I was physically fit or to restrain myself for the interrupted year of imprisonment was the question before me.

"After hard praying and thinking, I have come to the conclusion that up to the termination of the period of sentence, that is, up to the 3rd August next, I must not court imprisonment by offering aggressive civil resistance. This, however, in no way affects the advice given in the statement issued by me after the informal conference at Poona. That I have to suspend action for myself is unfortunate, but inevitable.

"My release has placed me in a most embarrassing position, but as a satyagrahi, as a humble seeker of truth, somehow or other, it offends my sense of propriety to court imprisonment in the circumstances created by my discharge. Whatever is the motive behind it, I may not quarrel with the release. And I must examine the act on its merit. It appears to me to be petty to force the Government to re-arrest me by taking aggressive action during the unexpired term of imprisonment, unless extraordinary circumstances, which I cannot foresee, arise, compelling me to revise my decision. There is no room for smallness in civil resistance.

"This self-imposed restraint is a bitter cup. When I stated at my trial after the arrest that to remain outside and be a helpless witness of the devastating and demoralizing effect of the ordinance rule was an unbearable agony, I said the simple unvarnished fact. That agony is no less today than it was on 4th August. But I must bear it. I cannot be a willing party to an undignified cat-and-mouse game, if the Government have any such thing in contemplation. Therefore, when and if I am arrested again and denied Harijan work, I would not hesitate, if I had the inner urge, to undertake a fast to the finish, which should not be broken even if the Government released me, as they did on 23rd August last, when the danger point had been reached.

"I must state the limitations of my self-restraint in clearer terms. Whilst I can refrain from aggressive civil resistance, I cannot, so long as I am to see, help guiding those who will seek my advice and preventing the national movement from running into wrong channels. It is the ever growing belief with me that truth cannot be found by violent means. The attainment of national independence is to me the search after truth. The terrorist methods, whether adopted by the oppressor or his victim can, I am convinced, be effectively answered never by violent resistance, but only by civil resistance. I would be guilty of disloyalty to my creed, if I attempted to put greater restraint on myself than I have adumbrated in this statement. If then the Government leave me free, I propose to devote this period to Harijan service and, if possible, also to such constructive activities as my health may permit."

Harijan Tour

1933

In September 1933 Gandhi moved to Satyagraha Ashram, Wardha. On September 30 he offered Sabarmati ashram to the Servants of Untouchables Society for the use of the Harijan cause. He remarked: "When the property was abandoned in August 1932, there certainly was an expectation that some day, whether through an honourable settlement or India coming to her own, the trustees would resume possession. Under the new proposal, the trustees divest themselves entirely of the property."

Gandhi was still not well enough to take any active part but he contributed regularly to *Harijan*. After six weeks' rest at Satyagraha Ashram, he was on the march again. On November 7, he started from Wardha on Harijan tour. The tour commenced with a visit to Rama Mandir of Wardha, which had been thrown open to Harijans during Gandhi's fast, and to the Laxminarayan temple, which was first to welcome the untouchables since 1928. The next function that morning was at Selu, a village, nine miles away from Wardha. Here Ramdeoji, a Marwari merchant, asked Gandhi to declare his private temple open to Harijans. "I believe it to be a happy augury that my tour commences with this sacred act," he said while performing the opening ceremony. "I do not know, if I shall be able to go through the programme that has been chalked out for me for the coming nine months. But, whether it is got through or not, my faith tells me that an undertaking which begins under such good auspices must result in good. The idol in the temple is not God. But since God resides in every atom, He resides in an idol. When the rites of consecration are performed, some special sanctity is attributed to the idol, and those who believe in temples perform worship by visiting them. I hold it a blasphemy to say that the Creator resides in a temple from which a particular class of His devotees sharing the faith in it are excluded. And Ramdeoji has, therefore, well remarked that this will be

a true temple only from this very day, when the temple is declared open to Harijans."

At the meeting at Selu, Gandhi observed: "It has been my firm belief for the last fifty years that there is no place in Hinduism for untouchability as we are observing it today. I have studied to the best of my ability all the religions of the world, and it has led me to the same conclusion. I should consider the sacrifice of my life as none too great for the sacred cause of the removal of this curse of untouchability. And, I have not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that, if untouchability is not removed root and branch, then Hinduism is bound to perish, for no religion can ever nurture itself on the degradation of its votaries."

Speaking at Wardha that evening he said: "It is good fortune for me that my tour begins at Wardha, which is the geographical centre of India. I want it also to be the centre of this movement. And I hope that the spirit with which Jamnalalji has opened his temple to Harijans and with which Vinoba and all his companions have cast in their lot with Harijans will prove infectious and spread through the whole of country."

The next two days Gandhi spent at Nagpur. There he visited a number of Harijan institutions, opened a Harijan Mahila Ashram and declared two wells open for Harijans. The programme was so heavy that he got very little time for meals and rest. He addressed many meetings in Nagpur and neighbouring villages. Everywhere people gathered in hundreds and thousands, and Caste Hindus and untouchables sat side by side and women attended the meetings in large numbers. He went about from place to place in an open Ford car, fitted with a plank bed for him to rest.

On November 8, he addressed a meeting of 30,000 people, the largest Nagpur had ever seen. He was happy to see this surging mass of men and women, and he opened his heart:

"This Harijan work is essentially religious from my standpoint. That it has many other results is equally true. There never has been a single truly religious activity but has had its influence on many departments of life. That, perhaps, is one of the tests, by which we recognize any great religious movement. I would like to state in all humility, but with perfect confidence, that I have taken up this movement in no spirit of antagonism to any other religion or community. It would be impossible to point to a single act of mine during the

past fifty years which could be proved to have been antagonistic to any person or any community. I have never believed any one to be my enemy. My faith demands that I should consider no one as such. I may not wish ill to anything that lives. It is my conviction that, if the Hindu heart is completely purged of the taint of untouchability, the event will have its inevitable influence not only upon all communities in India but on the whole world. The belief is daily becoming stronger. I cannot remove from my heart untouchability regarding several millions of human beings and harbour it towards some other millions. The very act of the Hindu heart getting rid of distinctions of high and low must cure us of mutual jealousies and distrusts of and among other communities. It is for that reason that I have staked my life on this issue. In fighting this battle against untouchability, I am fighting for unity not only among Hindu touchables and Hindu untouchables, but among Hindus, Muslims, Christians and all other different religious communities. Do not for one moment believe that I am interested in the numerical strength of Hindus. I have always insisted upon quality at the sacrifice of quantity. If I collected one million false coins they would be a worthless burden to me. One true coin would be worth its value. A religion cannot be sustained by the number of its lip followers denying in their lives its tenets. This great Hindu religion itself will perish, in spite of its so-called millions of followers, if its votaries persist in harbouring this evil of untouchability. Not because untouchables can be counted by the millions. It would perish even if they were a handful. Milk is poisoned and has to be thrown away whether you put a little or much arsenic in it. If we believe that we are all children of one and the same God, and God is Truth and Justice, how can there be untouchability amongst us, His children? God of Truth and Justice can never create distinctions of high and low among his own children. I, therefore, invite all without distinction of race and religion to assist this movement by praying for its complete success, so that we may all live in peace and friendship.

"If I want concord amongst all communities professing different faiths, I cannot desire discord among the so-called sanatanists and the reformers. I can harbour no ill will against the sanatanists. I ask them to extend the same toleration to the reformers that they would have the latter to extend toward themselves. If they can tolerate the faith and practice of others, why will they not tolerate the faith and

practice of the reformers? They may not help, so long as they regard untouchability as an integral part of Hinduism. I and fellow reformers firmly believe that untouchability is an evil; and if it is so and if the reformers will continue to exercise patience and gentleness, the heart of the sanatanists must melt. There can be no room for compulsion or violence in this great movement. I try to place before the vast mass of Hindus the results of a belief derived from such prayerful study of the Hindu scriptures as has been possible for me, and from association with those who are learned in them and, what is more, from my own practice based upon that belief. Surely, that cannot promote internal dissensions. I observe that many who oppose this movement have not taken the trouble to understand its real implications. The object of this tour is to place the position of the reformers clearly before the public. And I am hoping that, as the scope of the activities of the Servants of the Untouchables Society becomes known, the opposition to it will melt away. We want to remove their distrust. We do not desire to compel them to act against their belief. We want to win them over to the reform by gentlest persuasion, by appealing to their reason and their hearts. Love can never express itself by imposing sufferings on others. It can only express itself by self-suffering and by self-purification. I am convinced that, if the reformers will show in their own lives an increasing self-denial, purity, and capacity for suffering, they will be sure to melt the hearts of those who are today saturated with untouchability, believing it to be a desirable part of Hinduism.

"It is said that untouchables are so, because of the evil in them. But are the 'touchables' better? Are they sinless? Indeed, defenders of untouchability claim that some people are always untouchables and that no amount of pure conduct can cure them of the taint with which they are born. They must remain social lepers for ever. The fact is that whatever weaknesses we may notice about untouchables are a reflection of our own weaknesses and sins. They are a direct result of the ill-treatment that we have heaped upon their devoted heads. Their real rise, therefore, depends upon the removing of untouchability root and branch and upon showing a growing purity in our own lives. Thus the movement is dependent not so much upon pecuniary help, as upon correct conduct. Pecuniary help is to be an earnest of our determination to rid ourselves of the evil and to achieve self-purification.

"The question is repeatedly asked whether this reform includes inter-dining. Everybody knows what my personal views are. Since my youth upward, I have consistently dined with all so long as the rules of cleanliness have been observed. But that has nothing to do with the present movement. Inter-dining and the rest is a question for each individual to determine for himself. The movement which is organized by the Servants of the Untouchables Society stands for simple removal of untouchability in every shape and form, in so far as it is special to the so-called untouchables. They should have the same public rights and facilities as are enjoyed by every other Hindu, that is to say, they should have access to all public institutions, such as wells, schools, roads, temples, etc.

"One word as to the objections raised against Anti-Untouchability Bills. Sanatanists have contended that they constitute state interference in matters of religion. I suppose by interference is meant that which is undue. For it is possible to quote instances where the state interference has been sought and has been inevitable in matters of religion. What is sought is freedom from external compulsion. I am no more in favour of compulsion in matters affecting religion than sanatanists. These bills involve no such compulsion, no undue interference. The interference sought is beneficial and unavoidable. If the state compelled the opening of temples to Harijans, it would without doubt be undue interference, but it cannot be undue when the state is called upon to legalize the voluntary opening by a stated majority of temple goers or the trustees. Not to do so would be compulsion. The Temple Entry Bill merely seeks to legalize the action of a majority. And the other bill has been long overdue. It does not abolish untouchability altogether. It seeks to rob it of secular consequences. To clothe it with such consequences is to constitute an intolerable interference with the free exercise of religion. Nobody will deny that to make a religious obligation an obligation in law would be a gross and undue interference by the state. Observance of untouchability requires the voluntary recognition of it by both touchables and untouchables. For the state to compel observance by untouchables would be a gross interference in matters of religion. The bill, therefore, seeks to remove only the secular recognition of untouchability, without in any way interfering with the religious observance of it or the religious consequences of the breach of it. If the objectors mean, therefore, what they say and on a careful study

should find that the bills involve no compulsion, they should waive their objection."

At every meeting, collections were made and notes, silver and copper poured in. "For me, the money you give is a token of your identification with the Harijan cause," he said repeatedly. "Mere money will not avail; I must have your heart also with your money." At a way-side meeting which some villagers had arranged and where the collection was made on the spot, he remarked: "You may not think that you have lost your money. Those who have given have gained it, and those who, though able, have refrained have lost it. The money spent in gambling and drink and lust is a double loss, for you lose your money and also your reputation and health. Whereas those who give even a pice for the service of humanity gain more than they give. Untouchability is a blot on Hinduism. It is a canker eating into its vitals. I see with my eyes and smell with my nose that the body is in the process of destruction. If you think with me, you should contribute your mite to this cause. Once we lose the spiritual power of Hinduism, I do not know where we should be. A man without religion is like a ship without a rudder. The money, therefore, that you give is to my mind a token of your desire to save Hinduism from spiritual destruction."

At Katol, a poor man threw a cowrie in the collections. Gandhi offered it for auction at a public meeting in Nagpur. "The poor man," he said, "perhaps had nothing else to pay and he seems to have paid his all. It is an unsoiled cowrie. We attribute our earnings to fate, but what we give in the name of God and for the service of His creatures brings us merit. Looking at it as a symbol of sacrifice, it is more precious than gold." The cowrie fetched Rs.111.

There was another touching incident. At a meeting of sweepers in their own quarters, Abhyankar received Gandhi. Mrs. Abhyankar, taking out two golden bangles off her wrists, gave them to Gandhi, saying: "Nowadays, husbands leave very little for their wives. I can, therefore, only make this humble offering for the service of Harijans." Gandhi referred to it in his speech: "What Mrs. Abhyankar said on behalf of hundreds of women like her has touched me deeply. I admit that I have been instrumental in making paupers of doctors, lawyers and merchants. I do not repent. On the contrary, I rejoice that many have embraced poverty voluntarily. Why should Mrs. Abhyankar, who is endeavouring to identify herself along with her

husband, with the sweepers, put on golden bangles at all? In a poor country like India, where people walk for miles to get a dole of one pice per day, as they are doing in Orissa today, it does not behove anybody who cares for the poor to wear costly ornaments. In no other way can we identify ourselves with Harijans. Those who have nothing else have God and are men of God—Harijans. Those who have wealth are men of wealth. All credit, therefore, to Motilalji, Das, Vithalbhai and many others, whom I can mention and who parted with their possessions for the sake of the poor."

The experience of the first few days created new hopes in him. "I do not know what better proof any critic can demand," he said, "than these meetings and demonstrations that untouchability is disintegrating rapidly. That does not mean that the mass mind has changed altogether. But, if the evidence of the last four days is sustained throughout the tour, I feel certain about the cremation of the untouchability monster within a measurable distance of time." The total collections during the week amounted to Rs.14,812-12-6. Over a dozen places were visited and 200 miles covered.

As the tour progressed, it became more exacting. Gandhi usually went to bed at ten in the night and got up at three in the morning. From six in the morning till eight at night, he was on the move addressing meetings and visiting institutions. Along the route large crowds gathered for his *darshan*, many coming from long distances. Everywhere, he made them contribute to the Harijan Fund. "Give me a quarter anna, half an anna, anything you can." All things that were presented to him were sold in auction at the first opportunity. "*Do rupiya ek bar, teen rupiya, panch rupiya*" drawled on the thin little man with a smile on his face. Welcome addresses, caskets, even garlands were auctioned on the spot. Even children would freely give away their ornaments. But the auctioneer would insist on getting yet more everywhere. A little girl put flowers in his hands. He asked, "Why don't you present your ring to the Harijan Fund?" "Yes, I give it now," she said. "No, please don't," he said. "Your mother or father will question you, if you give it away." "No, never mind, you keep it." She hung her head, pulled a long face, she pleaded. "Give it then," he said and it was given. He took a citizens' casket at one place and began, "Its price is Rs. 250." "Its price is Rs. 75," Gandhi corrected himself. "Rs. 300" offered somebody. "I have got Rs.1,000 for caskets," said the auctioneer. "Rs. 300, once, Rs. 300

twice. I expect more. Come along." The bid went up. "Where are the purses?" he insisted, when a district board address was presented. The same good humour and impishness prevailed everywhere.

On November 16 he reached Amraoti, the largest city in Berar. His programme was very crowded and he utilized every minute for useful work. When his motor-car was about to reach the place of a women's meeting, there was a very large crowd blocking the way. As it was not possible to go in through the narrow gate, he proceeded at once to the Harijan quarters. To another meeting he went a few minutes before the scheduled time. The arrangements were still being made and only two carpets had been spread under a tree in front of a mud hut by the roadside. He briskly walked up to the spot and sat on a carpet. The people stood in a circle. He advised them to bathe daily, as water could be had easily and for nothing. He asked them to give up eating carrion and drinking. He sat there for seven minutes, while the people heard him. Then he said, "Now, shall I go?" At another place a girl was waiting with her present but she could not come near his car. He went to her, took a ring from her and asked, "Is there anybody else to present a ring?"

Despite hurry and excitement, Gandhi had a significant message to give to the citizens of Amraoti:

"Harijan service is a religious obligation. There is no room in it for cunning. It has to be absolutely truthful and non-violent. It can be accomplished only by sacrifice and penance. I very much fear that we shall not be able to win the trust of Harijans without self-purification. It should not surprise us if today they look upon all we do with suspicion and distrust. Hitherto, we have been riding on their shoulders. We must dismount, if we would do justice to them, and regard them as we regard other Hindus. Do you not realize that, if they were to boycott us and make us untouchables, life itself would become unbearable and come to a standstill?

"I suggest to the municipality that the Harijan dwellings cannot be a matter of satisfaction to its members. I admit that Amraoti does not stand alone in the shoddiness of its Harijan buildings. It can be demonstrated that by our shoddy treatment of Harijans we not only lose spiritually, but also materially. Western science has made the discovery that society that is indifferent to the welfare of its servants, suffers a heavy material loss. It should be easy enough for us to realize, that the society at large will gain much materially by

treating its Harijans well and giving them instruction in matters of hygiene and sanitation. True material welfare is never inconsistent with performance of religious obligations. Indeed, it can be shown that conduct which is inconsistent with true religion results in earthly loss. I go a step further and contend that, if we would act correctly towards Harijans and purify our hearts of untouchability, we should surely find that we had taken a long stride towards the achievement of communal unity.

"I would ask you to trust me when I say that there is no political motive behind my Harijan work. The political consequences of the removal of untouchability have no attraction for me. Indeed, I believe that, if we approached this question with any political motive, we should fail to serve Harijans and we should damage Hinduism. That real removal of untouchability will have political consequences is true enough. A duty religiously performed carries with it several other important consequences. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and everything else will be added unto you,' is to my mind a scientific truth."

The total journey undertaken during the second week of the tour was 290 miles and the amount collected was Rs. 9,000. Gandhi was asked: "What is the amount spent for the uplift of Harijans till now? Since when have you interested yourself with the Harijan cause?" He replied: "I began the Harijan uplift work in this country in 1920, when I brought the resolution to remove untouchability before the Congress. I began it first in South Africa and continued the work at Sabarmati in 1915. And when the masses were ready to hear me, I made it a part of the constructive programme of the Congress. About Rs. 20,00,000 has been spent for the removal of untouchability and upliftment of Harijans. I personally have spent nearly five lakhs of rupees. A considerable portion of the Tilak Swaraj Fund was spent for this purpose."

Pandit Lalnath, a sanatanist leader, and his young associates from the north, came to Deoli on the 11th, and they threatened to oppose temple entry by Harijans, by lying prostrate in front of the temple. They continued to disturb the meeting by shouting slogans. They again made their appearance a few days later at Dhamangaon and Amraoti, making abortive attempts to hold up Gandhi's car on the way, by lying prostrate before it. At Akola, on November 18, however, they had, an hour before the time of the public meeting, put

themselves at the gate of the house where Gandhi had put up, with a view to obstructing his way. Lalnath told Gandhi that he wanted him to give up his tour or give up talking about the Temple Entry Bills and that, therefore, he was offering satyagraha and paying him back in his own coin.

"This is not satyagraha, but the negation of satyagraha," Gandhi said. "You want me either to get you arrested by the police or to take the car over your bodies. Well, I would do neither. I would go on foot. Then, perhaps, you would hold my feet and make me your prisoner."

Lalnath: "Yes, we would hold your feet, and implore you to stop this tour."

Gandhi: "That would surely be violence."

Lalnath: "I cannot hide our intention from you. We want to be hurt by the police or by your volunteers. When this happens, I know that you would give up the tour."

Gandhi: "But, I have told you that I shall certainly not summon the police and I shall not let the volunteers hurt you."

Lalnath: "We must then continue to obstruct your passage."

Gandhi: "You are, indeed, very unreasonable. A satyagrahi must not be unreasonable. You want to provoke the police to violence. A satyagrahi never tempts anyone to commit wrong. And how can you resort to such an unbecoming behaviour, especially in religious matters? No earthly power can ever compel me to act contrary to my convictions."

Lalnath: "Then you should show us the better way."

Gandhi: "I can certainly do that. You should go back to Benares and ask the Lord of the Universe to wean me from my error. You should fast as I did."

Lalnath: "That we have not the ability to do."

Gandhi: "Then I am very sorry. I do not like this unseemly business. You should go to your advisers and tell them to persuade me by argument or prayer. If they cannot do so, they should tolerate what I am doing, even as I tolerate their opposition. You can see that I am simply putting the case against the evil before thousands, who come to listen to me."

November 20 was his day of silence, which he spent at Chikalda, a hill-station. There he did writing for *Harijan*, and on leaving the place next day he addressed six meetings of the villagers, on the way.

A week later, he gave a talk to the students of Rajkumar College at Raipur:

"I would like you sons of chiefs in these territories, to remember that you would be expected not just to confine yourselves, in these days of progressive enlightenment and rapid intercommunication, to your comparatively very small territories, but you would be expected to extend your horizon.

"In England there is a living family tie between its noblemen and their domestic servants. It was a matter of joy to me on visiting them in their homes to find that there was subtle bond of affection between them and their servants. There was no untouchability there. What I have told you is literally true of hundreds of the noblemen of England. Wherever I went, it was an unexpected pleasure to me, at the end of the visit, to be introduced to the domestic staff not as inferior beings but as members of the family. I wish that you would copy this virtue in your own lives. There is unfortunately among us a feeling that chiefs are chiefs, and they can never make a common cause with the ordinary people and so you find the tragedy, however necessary it may be today, that special schools and colleges have got to be built for you. You dare not, you will not, go to the common schools and colleges. You may not know that King Edward and the present king—I am speaking subject to correction—worked in the navy, as if they were ordinary sailors. Will you do that? You are confined as it were to hothouses and are taught to believe that you have been gifted with special divinity by God. Believe me that there is absolutely no difference whatsoever between you and the common folk except this that you have opportunities that are denied to them. But if you do not make use of the opportunities that God has given you, it will be counted against you in God's book of accounts. Know that the essence of education lies in drawing out the very best that is in you. You and I can take the positive comfort that all of us have an equal potential capacity for being good or bad. I, therefore, feel that all your education will be vain, if you do not learn the art of feeling one with the poorest in the land."

"You have to realize your oneness even with Harijans," he then concluded. "It may be that your parents will dispute the proposition that untouchability is an unmixed evil. You will then have to show the courage of your conviction, even as young Prahlad did. The idea of hereditary superiority and inferiority is in my opinion repugnant

to the spirit of Hinduism, which teaches the oneness of all life in unequivocal terms. The religions of mankind are being examined and tested both analytically and synthetically." He asked young princes to copy the virtues of Englishmen and shun their vices, "liquor and gambling at the races."

In the second half of November, he traversed nearly 1,400 miles and collected Rs. 32,000. It was a far cry from Raipur to Anantpur, covering 717 miles, passing through the rich plains of Chhatisgarh and the densely wooded plateau districts of Seoni, Chhindwarra and Betul, crossing the Satpura and Vindhya ranges, touching the rivers Mahanandi and Tapti at their sources, and crossing the Narmada at high current. Accompanied by Thakkar Bapa, he travelled by car for the most part, covering a maximum of 160 miles in a day and at times travelling till midnight, after a full day's crowded programme of meetings, visits and interviews.

In Anantpur, a small village, Gandhi saw the fructification of his constructive programme and he made it an occasion of a leading article in *Harijan*:

"Anantpur is a little village in Saugar district, C.P. (Hindi), containing 177 houses with a population, roughly, of 885. It has no post office or telegraph office. There is a weekly service from the nearest post office, Relly, twelve miles from Anantpur. It is a typically poor village of poor India. The villagers are occupied not more than four months in the year. There was hardly any supplementary occupation for the villagers as a whole before an event that happened four years ago.

"It was in 1929 that a young man, with a single-minded zeal seldom surpassed, chose Anantpur for his experiment, after one year's travelling in search of such a village. He is khaddar-mad. He believes in the message of khaddar as much as perhaps I do. I doubt if he would not replace 'perhaps' by 'if not more than'. I would submit to his correction, if he made it. His faith in himself would put to shame the tallest among us. He believes that the only permanent cure for the enforced idleness of the peasantry of India and their consequent chronic poverty is the universal adoption of the spinning wheel. His name is Jathalal Govindjee. He does not know English. He is no Gujarati scholar. Himself a town-bred man, by dogged pertinacity he has inured himself to the hardships of village life and lives like, and in the midst of, villagers. He has three companions with

him. He is a thorough believer in one thing at a time and, therefore, will not pursue other social service, no matter how tempting it may be. If the spinning wheel is well established in every cottage, he thinks that all other problems that puzzle and drag down villagers will solve themselves. He will say: 'I shan't preach temperance or thrift to the villager, for no drunkard will take to the wheel, if he will not give up his drink, and to preach thrift to a pauper is a mockery. It will be time to preach it, when I have put a few coppers in his pocket. Since I believe that every revolution of the wheel will mean a revolution in his daily life, I am going to be patient with his vices and many drawbacks. And I have faith that, if I am a clean man, my cleanness cannot but touch both the inside and the outside of the villager.' With varying fortunes, but with an unvarying faith, he and his companions have plodded for the past four years. Their formula is self-dependence writ large. Khadi must support itself. The way to make it do so is for the villagers to spin, and weave too, if possible, for their own use. They may sell only the surplus, as they do with the grain they grow. No cloth can be cheaper than that spun and woven in one's home, even as no bread can be cheaper than home-baked from grain grown in one's own field and ground in one's own home. The business of these servants of the villagers is merely to instruct and help. They visit every cottage and offer to teach them ginning, spinning, carding, weaving and dyeing. They improve their wheels and manufacture new ones for sale only from the material available in the village. This has given extra work to the village carpenter and the village blacksmith. Every item is well thought out. They have an almost complete record of the condition of every cottage and also its dwellers. They have made a fairly accurate study of the villagers' wants and woes, customs and manners, and they have published their report in Hindi. Their workshop is a busy hive. Work is being done in a neat and methodical manner. A common log-book is kept containing a day-to-day summary of the work done by each worker. I have mentioned only four foundation workers. Needless to say that they have raised workers in seventeen villages they are now serving within a five-mile radius of Anantpur.

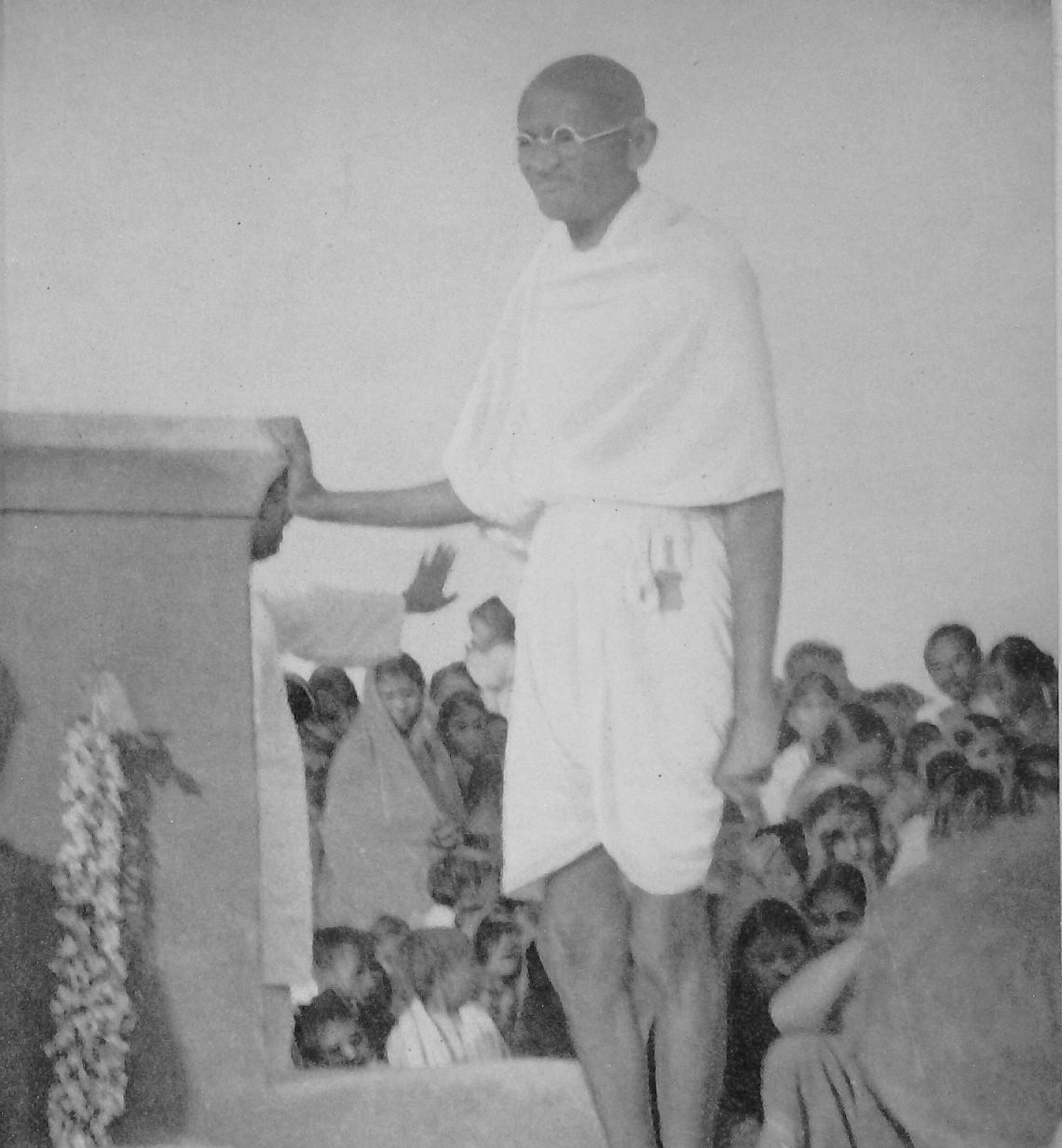
"A word as to the condition of the cottages I saw. I visited over six, including one belonging to a Harijan. I may not omit to mention that the Harijans have been found to be the readiest to take to the message.

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi with Thakkar Bapa during the Harijan tour, November 1933

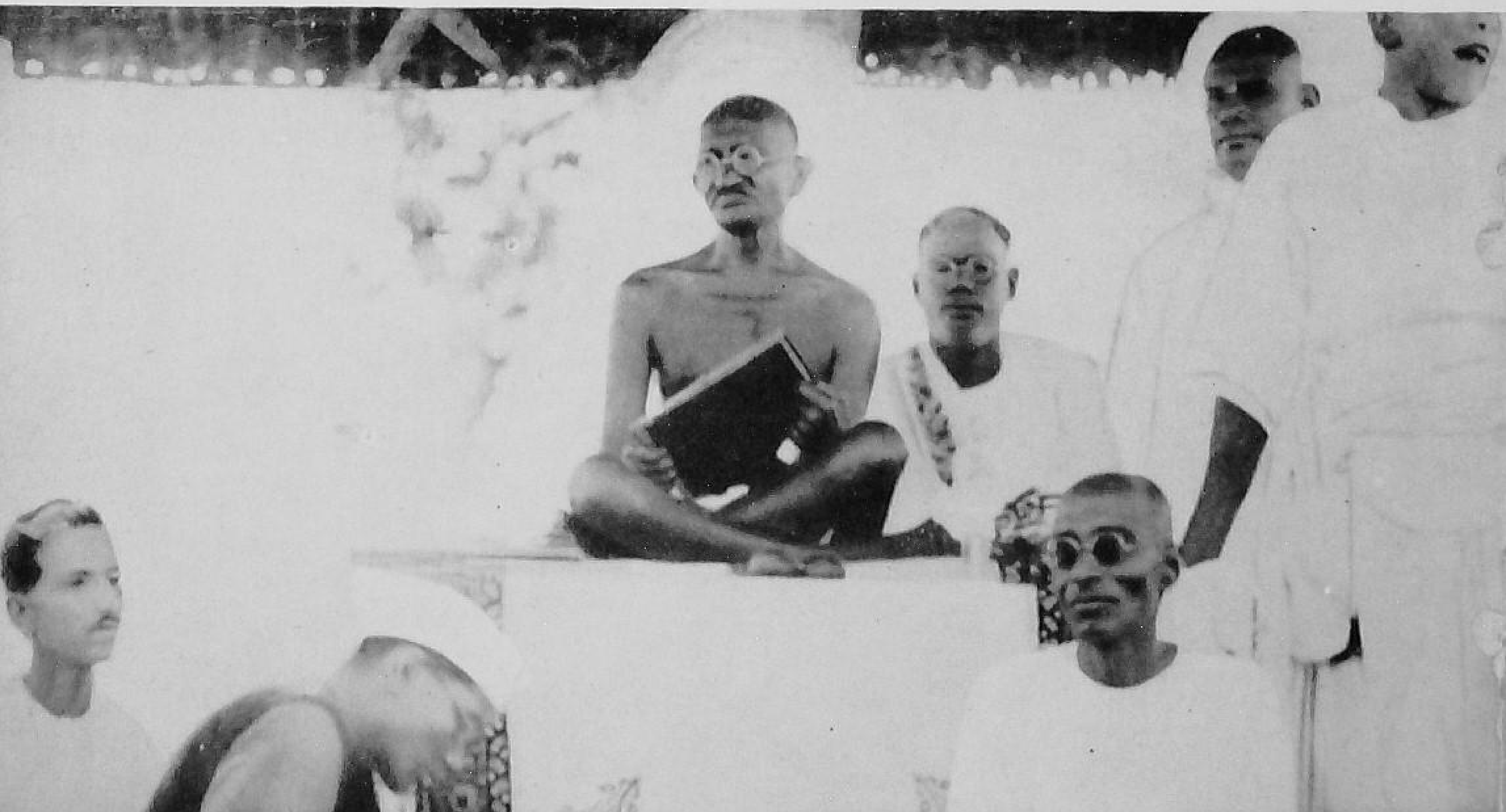
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi receiving a silver casket in Nagpur on the second day of Harijan tour, November 8, 1933



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi declaring open a well for Harijans in a village near Nagpur, November 1933

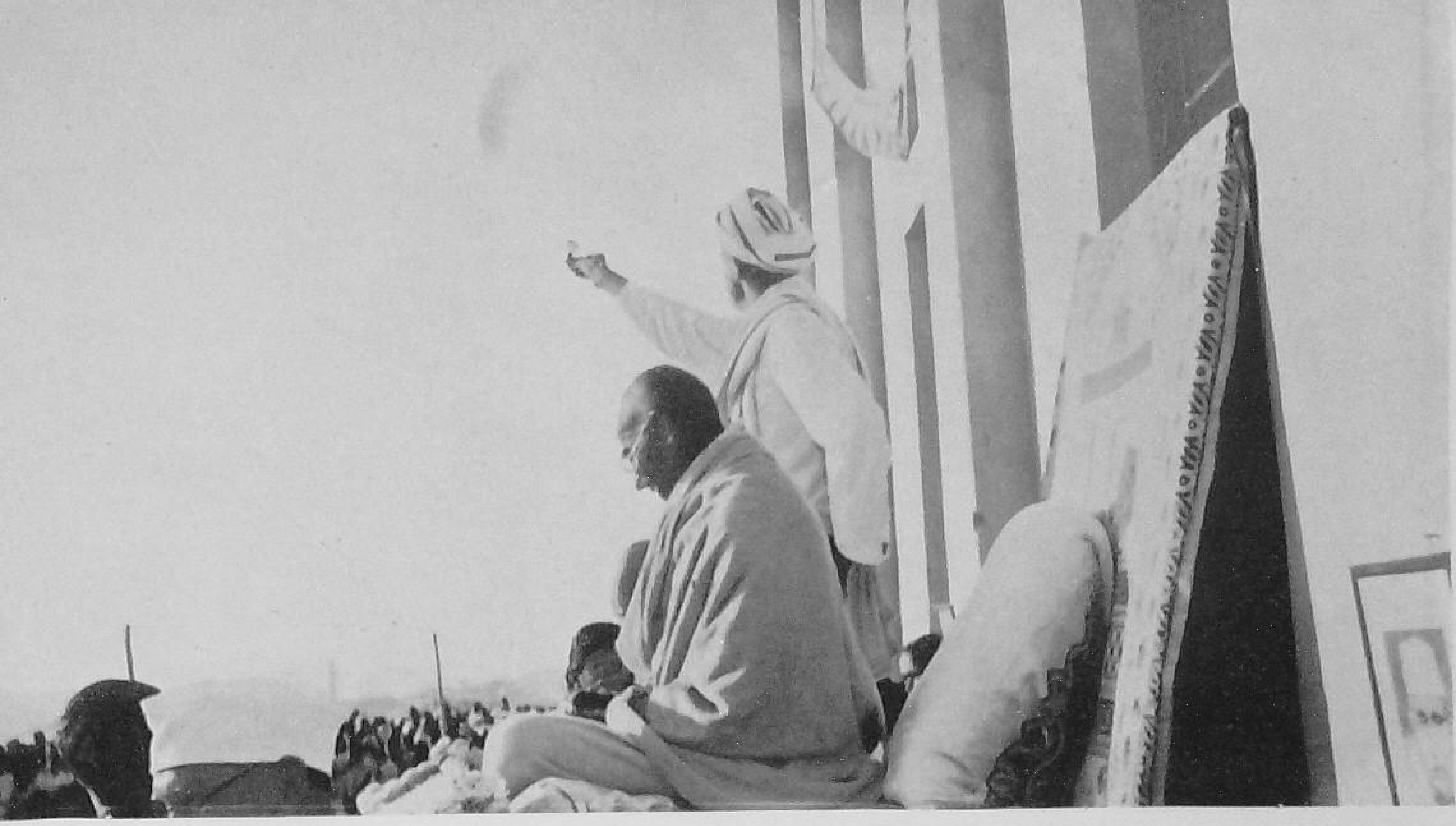


From Sumati Morarjee Collection

During the Harijan tour, Bezwada, December 16, 1933
At Madras, December 20, 1933

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi greeting the eager crowd from balcony of the State Guest House, Coonoor, January 1934



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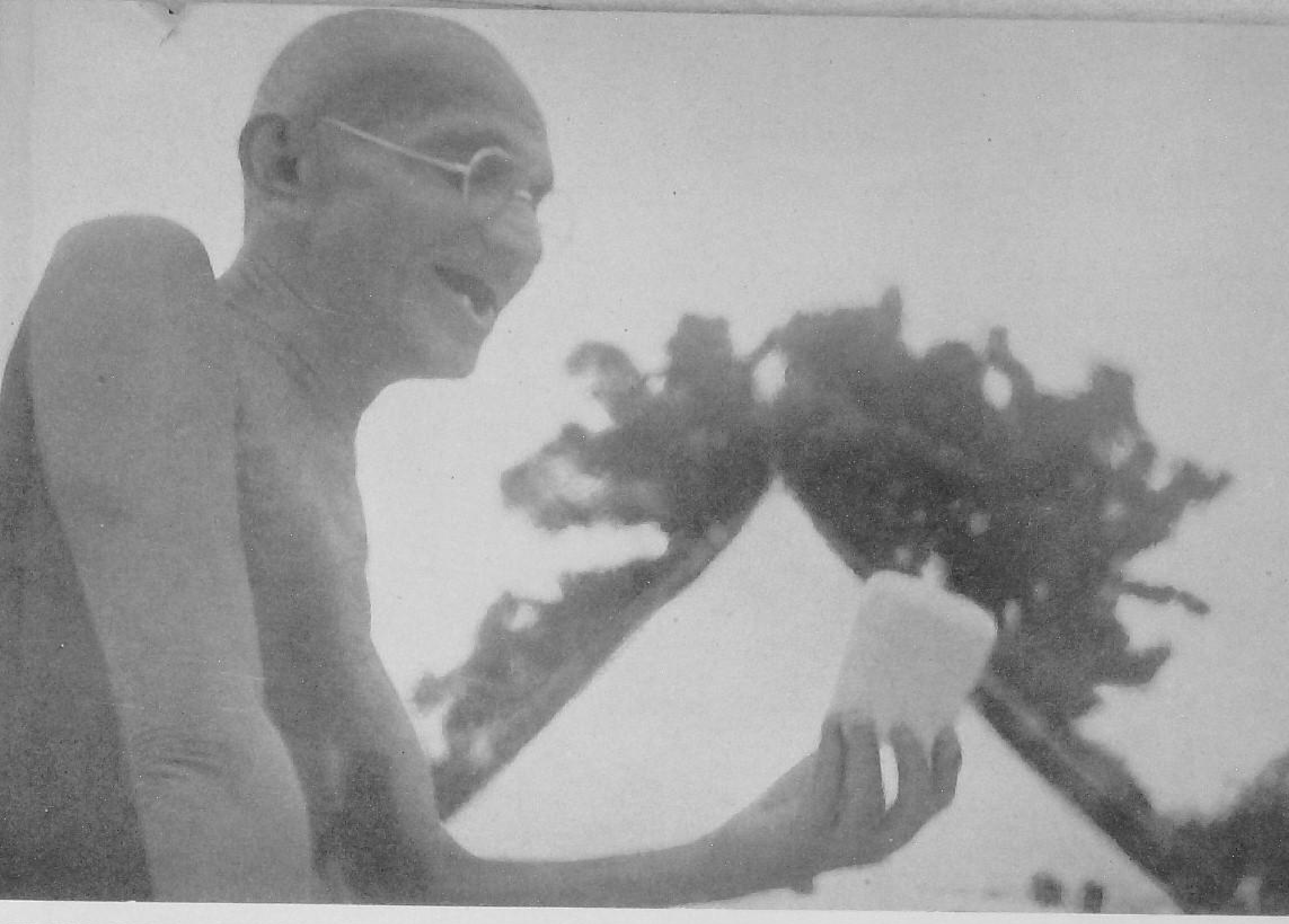
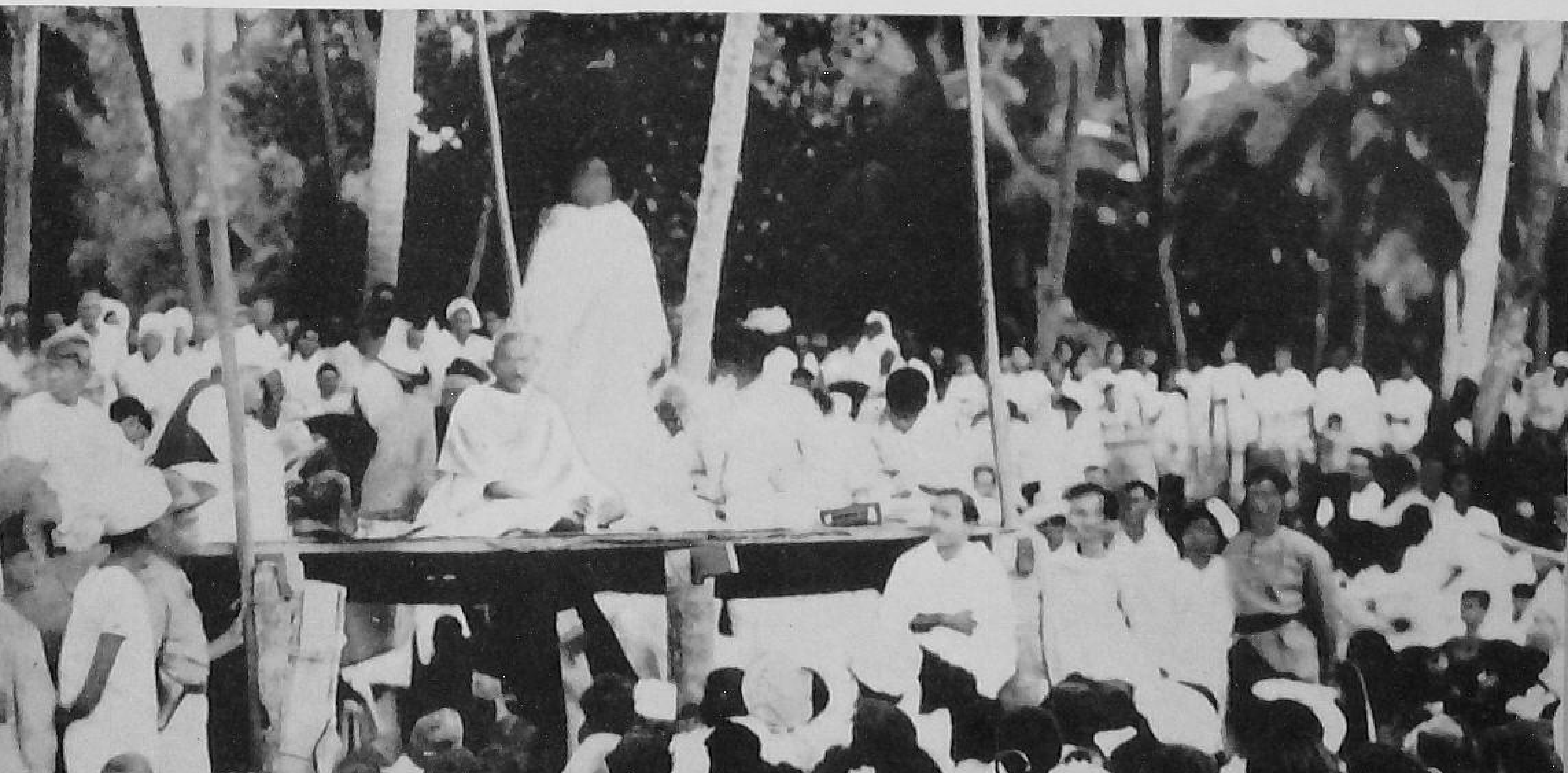
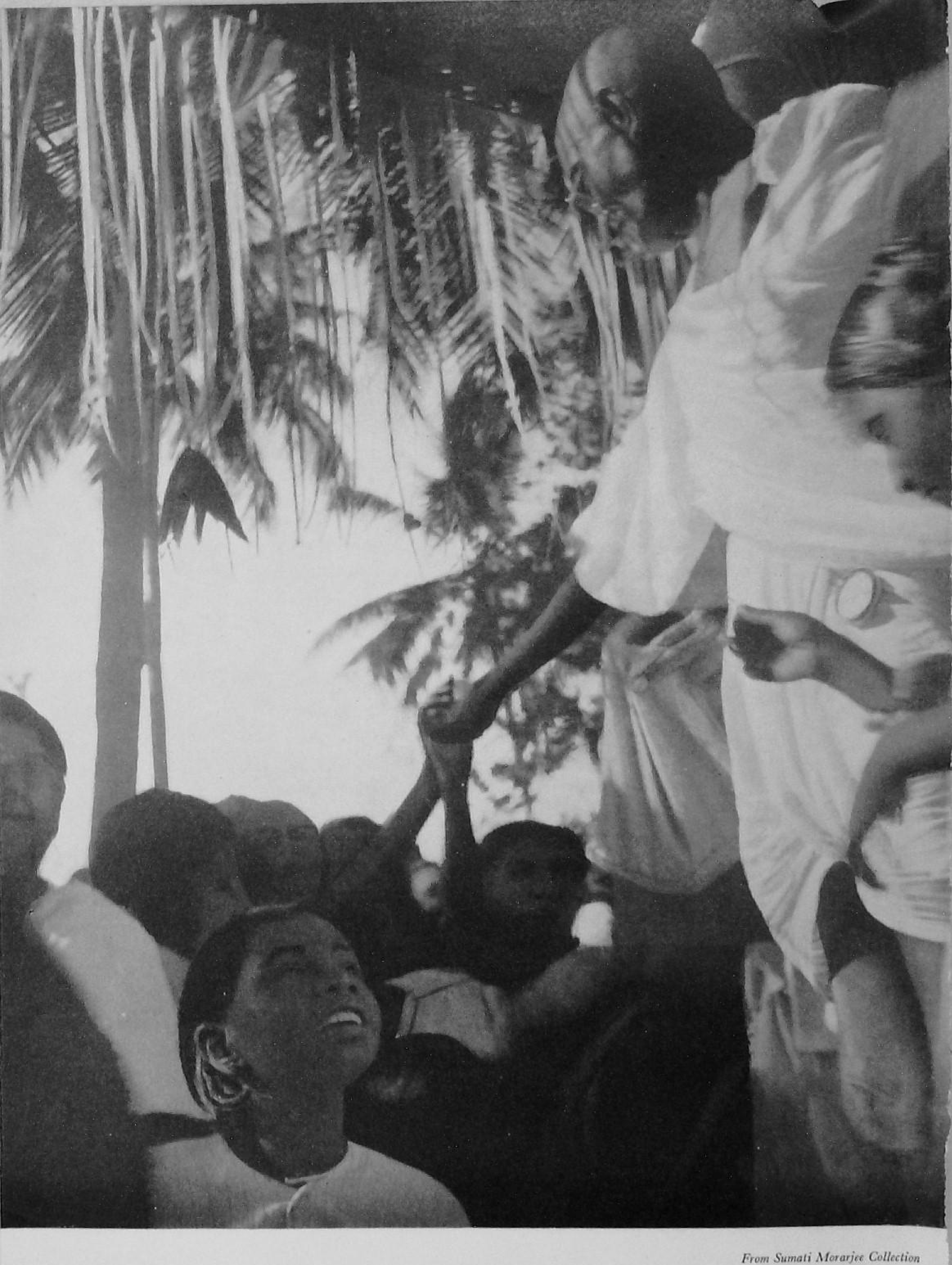
Auctioning of articles presented to Gandhi for Harijan Fund, Bangalore, January 1934
A trembling Nayadi approaches Gandhi to tell him his woes, Malabar, January 1934





From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi auctioning an article during the Harijan tour, Palghat, January 10, 1934
Gandhi addressing a meeting at Guruvayur, January 11, 1934



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi collecting coppers for Harijan Fund, Calicut, January 16, 1934

"The cottages I saw were all low-roofed, with walls made of mud. There was no ventilation in them worth mentioning, no boxes, and hardly any metal pots. The inmates were in rags, except where they had made khaddar for themselves. The only belonging I saw consisted generally of empty mud granaries to contain grain for the year. One room served as kitchen, dwelling and the rest. Their beds were straw covered with rags, again except where they had woven khaddar for themselves. Their food consists of *jowar chapatis* and a pulse, with or without oil. Of milk and ghee they hardly ever have anything. The *chamar* whose cottage I saw was an exception. He sported two cows. Whether he or his children ever get a drop of milk for themselves is another story. The villagers were poorly fed and worse clothed. Some children go stark naked from year's end to year's end. They warm themselves in the sun by day, and before a wretched fire at night. There are families in Anantpur who, I am told, started this khaddar industry literally with an investment of one pice for cotton. This was doubled the next day by the sale of yarn spun from one-piceworth cotton and thus by progressive realization they are able now to have their own clothes."

The hurricane tour had its effect on his health. When he reached Jubbulpore, on December 8, Dr. Ansari found that the continuous strain had caused a rise in his blood pressure. "If you want him to break down in a few days," the doctor said, "you may go on with the programme as it is. But if you wish that he should complete the nine months' tour, take the utmost precaution and in no case take more than four hours' work from him per day." Gandhi stayed on for four days in Jubbulpore and addressed a few meetings. Addressing the workers, he said: "If this effort to abolish root and branch the distinctions of high and low succeeds, it will have a healthy reaction on all spheres of life, and the war between capital and labour will cease and give place to co-operation and concord between the two. If we have understood the full implications of this war against untouchability, we should have no difficulty in realizing that untouchability based on birth is one of the countless phases of that curse. I implicitly believe that if we succeed in abolishing untouchability from Hinduism, all the quarrels between the classes and communities that we see today in India will cease. Once the hearts are purified, it will be found easy to overcome all the difficulties in the way of heart unity. The phase that we are dealing with does not exhaust

all the possibilities of the struggle. Untouchability is a many-headed monster and appears in many shapes and forms, some of them so subtle as not to be easily detected. There are several degrees in untouchability. I was conscious of all these implications when I took up this war and made up my mind to devote all my full energy, in the evening of my life, to this work."

Gandhi spent a few hours at Mandla—the place replete with historical reminiscences, being the site of the ancient city and the seat of learning—Mahishmati—associated with the memory of Saraswati and Shankaracharya. It was here that the great philosopher scored his initial victory over the forces of formalism and set in motion a tremendous wave to revivify Hinduism. "The same scene is now being enacted here," said the citizens' address, "after twelve centuries when you have come to us to awaken our minds to the sins we are committing towards a portion of humanity." In reply, Gandhi gave them the essence of Hinduism:

"There are two sets of pundits who give opposite interpretations of shastras. The layman has to make use of his god-given reason and choose between the two. Untouchability, I have found, appeals neither to the intellect nor to the heart. The essential urge of the heart is towards compassion and sympathy for the sinner. Temples are meant for sinners, where they can wash away their sins. What is the use of temples to a liberated sinless soul, who sees God everywhere? If you believe that Harijans are in their present plight as a result of their past sins, you must concede that they have the first right of worship in temples. God has been described by all the scriptures of the world as a protector and saviour of the sinner.

"There is untouchability in shastras in a particular sense. Anger, lust and such other evil passions raging in the heart are the real untouchables. It is indeed, a prostitution of shastras to interpret them as sanctioning the distinction we observe today. A true man of piety will consider himself a sinner and, therefore, untouchable. We in our haughtiness have hitherto misinterpreted shastras and have raised a sin to the status of a religious tenet. I claim to be a true sanatanist because I make the greatest effort to live up to the truth as I see it. Diversity there certainly is in the world, but it means neither inequality nor untouchability. An elephant and an ant are dissimilar. Nevertheless God has said that they are equal in His eyes. The inner oneness pervades all life. The forms are many, but the informing

spirit is one. How can there be room for distinctions of high and low where there is this all-embracing fundamental unity, underlying the outward diversity? For, that is a fact meeting you at every step in daily life. The final goal of all the religions is to realize this essential oneness."

During the first week of December, he covered over 600 miles and collected about Rs. 21,000. During the second week, he stayed five days in Delhi to go through a heavy programme of work. The first thing he did there was to visit the Harijan quarters. The sharp contrast between the hovels and the palaces haunted him throughout his stay in Delhi. Addressing the students of six colleges, on the occasion of unveiling the portrait of the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, Gandhi placed his programme before them. He said: "Motilalji was above all distinctions of high and low. He never gave a place to untouchability in his long and varied life. He had the heart of a prince. He knew how to earn as well as to give away. Keeping his portrait before you must, therefore, be significant of your resolve to follow in his footsteps." He then asked the students to give a more tangible proof than money of their love for Harijans by clearing the Augean stables: "I saw three *bastis* out of four, one of them being the worst of all. One can never imagine, unless one has seen with his own eyes, that there can be such place for human habitation. You should gird up your loins and clean these plague spots."

To the women of Delhi, he made a fervent appeal to shed untouchability: "If you consider Harijans untouchables, because they perform sanitary service, what mother has not done such service for her children? It is the height of injustice to consider Harijans, who are the most useful servants of society, as untouchables and outcastes. I have undertaken this tour to awaken the minds of Hindu sisters to a sense of this sin."

In Delhi alone, Gandhi collected nearly Rs.12,000 and the total collections during the six weeks had reached over Rs. 90,000. Critics condemned his practice of appealing to women for the gift of their ornaments and his auctioning things given as donations. "I would like," he said, "the thousands of sisters who attend my meetings to give me most, if not all, of the jewellery they wear. In this country of semi-starvation of millions and insufficient nutrition of practically eighty per cent of the people, the wearing of jewellery is an offence to the eye. A woman in India has rarely any cash which she can

call her own. But the jewellery she wears does belong to her, though even that she will not, dare not give away, without the consent of her lord and master. It ennobles her to part with, for a good cause, something she calls her own. Most of this jewellery has no pretension to art, some of it is positively ugly and a harbinger of dirt. Such are anklets, heavy necklaces, clasps, worn not for adjusting the hair, but purely as a decoration for unkempt, unwashed and often evil-smelling hair, or row upon row of bangles from wrist to elbow. It is so much capital locked up or, worst still, allowed to wear away. And in this movement of self-purification, the surrender of jewellery by women or men I hold to be a distinct benefit to society. Those who give, do so gladly. My invariable condition is that on no account should the jewellery donated be ever replaced. Indeed, women have blessed me for inducing them to part with things which had enslaved them. And, in not a few cases, men have thanked me for being instrument for bringing simplicity into their homes.

"Now, a word about auctions. I have seen nothing wrong about them. They set up a healthy rivalry and are an innocent method of evoking the generous impulse in man or woman for a noble cause. Why is it wrong to pay a price beyond its intrinsic value for an article which one prizes even though it be as a memento, if it is not wrong to pay fabulous prices for worn-out manuscripts of authors reputed to be great? Surely, the price of an article is what a man voluntarily pays for it. And let it be remembered that the people who bid at my auctions do not pay fancy prices just for pleasing me. I can recall occasions when I have not been able to induce bids, even though the audiences have been otherwise as enthusiastic or responsive as anywhere else."

One of the important engagements in Delhi was with the members of the central board of the Servants of Untouchables Society. Gandhi explained to them how to carry on propaganda for the two bills in the Assembly which were still under discussion. He said that he was sure that public opinion must be consolidated and it was the bounden duty of the board to secure the passage of the bills. But the members of the board must not rub the sanatanists in the wrong way. Unfortunately, their opinion was neither intelligent nor consolidated. They did not take much trouble to study the problem; but they were in a state of excitement and anger and wanted to exercise utter compulsion. Under these circumstances anti-untouchability workers must

work carefully. They ought to produce sound legal opinion favouring the measures and, therefore, all the existing associations which could speak on the legal aspect should be invited to give expert opinion. Hindu reform associations also must be asked to express themselves on the question.

Gandhi said that he once thought of getting resolutions passed at the public meetings during his tour, where he was sure that opinion would be overwhelmingly favourable. But, as he thought that, that opinion would not be an intelligent one, he did not like to have it. What was really wanted was the expression of the well-considered Hindu opinion. He was looking forward with a great deal of pleasure for a stiff fight during his tour in the Madras Presidency, where he expected stiff opposition.

Warning Voice

1933-1934

On December 16, 1933, Gandhi's tour in the south commenced with Bezwada. On the first day he called a meeting of Harijan workers of Andhra and gave them a talk on anti-untouchability campaign: "I cannot too strongly urge on you the necessity of making only the purest of sacrifices for the sake of this cause, which is essentially religious and is calculated to bring about a transformation in millions of hearts. No impurity in the shape of untruth, selfishness or hypocrisy should be allowed to creep into the movement. In no other way but by a thoroughly spotless character and the utmost purity of means can we succeed in purging Hinduism of the curse of untouchability that has taken deep root and has for centuries held sway over Hindu society. All the Hindu sages have taught by precept as well as by example that religion can be protected and purified only by penance, which means a thorough cleansing of the heart." In answer to the question as to how to deal with the opposition of the sanatanists, he said: "I am quite clear on this point. Those who are in favour of the reform owe it to the cause they have at heart that they should not only tolerate the opponents but should also hear them with the utmost patience and attention. We may never harbour anger or ill will towards them. We want to win them over by love. We desire to convert them to our view and also to invite their assistance in this cause of purification. I have an implicit belief that, if we carry on our work in the right spirit and treat the opponents not as enemies but as our own kith and kin, we are bound to succeed in winning them over to our side. Our purity and suffering will not fail to touch their hearts."

During his one-day stay in Bezwada, Gandhi visited six places and addressed twelve public meetings and collected over Rs. 5,000 for the Harijan cause. The next day he went to Masulipatam, crossing a rich territory watered by the Krishna and her numerous canals. The

miserable hovels of the untouchables on the way shocked him. At a public meeting he stated: "We shall dig our own grave if we do not purge ourselves of this curse of untouchability, we shall have to pay with bitter tears if we, in our pride, miss the god-given opportunity today. We should have no peace, till this monster is buried and those whom we have hitherto kept under our heels are put on a par with us in every respect. Let us awake to the sense of this sin and save, before it is too late, ourselves and our religion from going to perdition." After the meeting, he motored down to the neighbouring villages and threw open three temples for Harijans.

The Andhra tour was interrupted on December 20 by a three-day visit to the city of Madras. In reply to the corporation address, Gandhi introduced himself as a scavenger and reminded the house that when he first received an address from the corporation, he had dealt with the scavenging of the streets of Madras. "My mission of scavenging," he said, "is of a special character. It is purely religious, taking religion in the broadest sense of the word. It is a deeply humanitarian mission." Opening a swadeshi exhibition, which was the next item on the agenda, Gandhi narrated how "the introduction of hand-spinning and hand-weaving had brought a ray of comfort and light into the dark homes of thousands of Harijans." Referring to the various swadeshi industries depending on Harijans' labour, the leather industry among them, he observed: "Not less than nine crores of rupees worth of hides go out of India, which, if we deal honourably by Harijans, will be all absorbed in India, or at least not leave the shores in the raw condition that they do at present. If we work at it intelligently and in co-operation with the downtrodden Harijans, get off their backs and treat them as our own comrades, entitled to the same privileges and the same honour that we claim for ourselves, then, in spite of the tremendous handicaps with which we are working, this land of ours can become a land of plenty and prosperity and not of downright pauperism, in which the country is sunk at present."

On the very first day of his stay in Madras, Gandhi addressed six meetings. To the women, he said: "I have come here to request you to do one thing. Forget altogether that some are high and some are low. Forget altogether that some are touchables and some are untouchables. I know that you all believe in God as I do. And God cannot be so cruel and so unjust, as to make the distinctions of high and

low between man and man, and woman and woman. This untouchability is the greatest blot on Hinduism, and I have not hesitated to say that if untouchability lives, Hinduism dies. I have no hesitation in saying that even God's patience can be exhausted, and He will no longer be patient towards this atrocity that man has been doing to man in Hindu India."

Addressing the students, he asked them to take the broom and the bucket and clean out all the Harijan quarters of Madras and serve Harijans in a concrete manner: "If you want to convince Hindu society that untouchability cannot be part of religion, and that it is a hideous error, you have to develop character and show in your lives, that to believe in some people being touchables and some untouchables is not religion but the reverse. If you have no character to lose, then people will have no faith in you. You shall have to move among the masses; you shall have to bring about a change in their hearts. The so-called orthodox do not represent the masses, nor do they represent the correct interpretation of the scriptures. They can react on the masses. But character alone will have real effect on the masses. Masses will not argue. They will listen to them; if they have no credentials the masses will not listen." He then told them how they could serve Harijans: "It is in the midst of these people that you have to go and bring a ray of light and hope. You will have to bend your backs and work in their midst and assure them that you have gone to them not with any mental reservations, nor with any base motives, but with the pure motive of serving them and taking the message of love and peace in their midst. If you will do that you will find a ready response from them."

Madras gave a unique demonstration of its affection for him that evening. The public meeting, held on the beach, attended by over one lakh of people was the largest gathering Madras had ever witnessed. In a short speech, he said:

"This is a wonderful demonstration that you have made of your affection. I hope that every one of you realizes the seriousness and magnitude of the mission that I am trying to carry out in the name of God, for His sake, and for His forsaken children whom we have come to understand as Harijans. There can be in the eyes of God no distinction between man and man, even as there is no distinction between animal and animal. Had God designed one part of humanity to be lower than others, He would have put some distinguishing

mark upon some parts of our bodies, whereby these distinctions could have been unmistakably seen, felt and demonstrated. Go where you will from one end of India to the other, you will fail, as I have failed, to notice any such distinguishing feature in connection with those who call themselves high Caste Hindus and those whom the so-called high Caste Hindus describe as untouchables, invisibles and what not. I, therefore, ask you seriously to consider this urgent question. I have said, and I repeat again before this vast audience what I have said and from a thousand platforms, that, if we do not remove untouchability root and branch from our hearts, we are a doomed race, and Hinduism like many other 'isms' will perish and the discredit will be ours. In the midst of this din and noise I must not put before you the implications of this great movement. Suffice it to say that, when untouchability is removed from our hearts, Harijans will feel the glow of freedom, and we will treat them as ourselves, we will know that they have the same rights absolutely and without any exception as we have, and that Harijans will be subject to the same discipline as *savarna* Hindus. If by God's grace this message reaches your hearts, we shall forget all distinction of high and low."

On the second day of his stay in Madras, he visited the Harijan quarters and received an address from Harijans. He asked them to play their part nobly in this movement of self-purification. He also addressed on that day several meetings of the labourers. "Labour at least should have no distinction of high and low," he said. "Having lived in the midst of labourers since nearly forty years, I know to my sorrow that in labour also there are distinctions observed by the labourers. You must forget all these distinctions. Harijan labour and non-Harijan labour are absolutely one. It is impossible that God, who is the God of Justice, could have made the distinctions that men observe today in the name of religion."

On December 22, Gandhi presided over the annual convocation of the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, which during its fifteen years of existence had to its credit about 388 branches spread out all over southern India. Addressing the students, he said: "You claim to be a part of India. How can you neglect this national language? Today I am engaged in one mission and one only. I, therefore, close with the warning that, if you will serve the Harijan cause throughout India, you will know what a handicap you are labouring under if you do not know Hindustani."

His visit to Madras had strengthened him in the belief that untouchability was fast dying out. On the eve of his departure from the city, in a press interview, he said:

"As usual, I have experienced nothing but deep affection from the people wherever I have gone. But I must confess that I was unprepared for the vast demonstration that I witnessed at the beach and the demonstrations that I witnessed during the visits to several labour areas. The numbers that attended these demonstrations everywhere exceed past records. Whilst there is no doubt that personal affection and attachment had to do a great deal with them, I am convinced that the vast mass of humanity that seemed to cling to me had fully understood and appreciated what I stood for and what I had come for. If their religious sense had revolted against the drive against untouchability, the exhibition of their affection, even if I could not have lost it altogether, would have been tempered with moderation and restraint, if not with recognizable coolness. I am used to reading the mass mind by taking at a sweep the expression in their eyes and their general demeanour. I could detect no trace of disapproval of what I have been doing in connection with untouchability. The manner in which they came forward with their contributions, when I asked for them, was also significant and went to strengthen the impressions I have given. I am, therefore, filled with hope for the future, and I feel that even in the south, untouchability is shaken to its very roots. I would like to say to my sanatanist friends that I have no desire whatsoever to wound their susceptibilities. I want to find out the points of agreement and I know that there are many and that the points of disagreement are few. If approach to them cannot bring about immediate agreement, I know that time will, if I have the patience, which I feel I have."

The same feeling he voiced in his assurance given to a Harijan deputation. "Untouchability is a dead thing," he said, "but being a monster it still seems to be taking breath. But it is the last breath." During the week ending on December 22, he covered 700 miles and collected over Rs. 27,000.

From Madras, Gandhi came back to Andhra on December 23. He spent one week in visiting Guntur, Cocanada, Ellore, Rajahmundry, Vizagapatam and other places. He urged the organizers to spend less and to save more for the Harijan Fund: "I am making collections for the Harijan cause, which I regard as a mission of penance and

purification." He addressed the villagers, sitting on the hood of his car, and thus set an example in economy of time and money. "Give something, it may be even a pice," he pleaded, "give up smoking for a day and give the saving to me." "A bangle for an autograph," he said to women. "Andhras are no Scotsmen," he said and Andhras loosened their fists. One man offered to pay down Rs. 116 for every minute of Gandhi's stay in his house but only two minutes could be spared. "I am a Harijan worker, my time is precious," he told a palmist. But hurry and bustle did not rob him of his humour. To a doctor, he asked, "Is there a cure for untouchability?" He would often attend to little details of life. He lifted up the chin of a Harijan child and said, "Blow your nose."

During the fortnight that Gandhi spent in Andhra, he travelled 1,024 miles by train, 667 miles by car, 15 miles by launch and 2 miles on foot. He visited 76 villages and towns, addressed 60 meetings, and about 620,000 people had the opportunity of hearing him, and double the number of having his *darshan*. The collections in the districts amounted to Rs. 68,430, of which Rs. 59,177 was collected in cash and Rs. 9,253 in jewellery.

He had one mission before him—the eradication of untouchability. "Whether we desire it or not," he observed, "untouchability is going. But if during this period of probation we repent for the sin, and if we reform and purify ourselves, history will record that one act as a supreme act of purification on the part of the Hindus. But if, through the working of the time spirit, we are compelled to do things against our will and Harijans come to their own, it will be no credit to the Hindus or to Hinduism. But I go a step further and say that, if we fail in this trial, Hinduism and Hindus will perish."

On January 4, 1934, Gandhi entered Mysore state on his "begging mission". The response here too was no less marked. Typical of his method of collecting funds was the remark he made at a meeting in Bangalore: "I was almost going to say a good purse, but I know you could have made it a larger one." He explained the significance of the Harijan movement at a meeting next day in Mysore city. "My mission covers a much wider theme than the economic welfare of the Harijans. We are bound to jealously guard their economic and educational welfare. But this is not enough, if we are to do reparation to the Harijans for the untold hardships to which we have subjected them for centuries past. They are entitled to precisely the same rights

and privileges as any other citizen. And as Hindus they are entitled to the same social amenities and religious privileges that any other Hindu is entitled to. My mission, therefore, is to invite *savarna* Hindus to wash themselves clean of the guilt of untouchability. If you understand thoroughly the spirit of this message, the change of heart is an incredibly simple performance; and you can see in the twinkling of an eye how, if this change comes about in *savarna* Hindu hearts, the economic, social and religious progress of Harijans must follow. It will then be a sign and seal of this change of heart. All these purses, you have been kind enough to give me, I consider as an earnest of your determination to make that change of heart."

From Mysore city Gandhi went to Badanval, a khaddar centre. Speaking to the weavers and spinners, he explained how they could add to their earnings by introducing improvement in their implements, reforming their habits and giving up vices. To Harijans he gave his usual advise of self-improvement: "You should wash your children everyday, and so should you wash yourselves. In the morning you should have what I call internal wash, that is to say, the first thing you should do on getting up is to take Ramanam and pray to God that you should pass the day in sacredness, so that no wrong word may pass your lips and no wrong act may be done by you. Then you should give yourselves an external wash." When he was told that Harijans of the locality had given up eating beef, he said: "I would like you to be able to say the same thing about drink. What is the use of paying for some coloured water which makes us so mad that we forget the distinction between mother, wife and sister? I have heard Harijans telling me that drink is prescribed for them on occasions of marriage and death. I can tell you, without fear of contradiction, that that is the suggestion of the devil."

Everywhere he went on sounding the note of warning: "If the Caste Hindus do not listen to the warning voice, I have not a shadow of a doubt that Hinduism will perish. I have, therefore, called this a period of probation. A period of probation comes in a man's or a society's life only once." "I do not want to create dissensions," he said at another meeting. "I assure those who oppose me that I shall not do a single thing which I know may be contrary to truth and love." "But," he added, "we have created a hope in the hearts of Harijans. They have begun to feel that they are going to be freed from serfdom. I expect of you that you will fulfil it. It is said in all

religions of the world that, if the poor are deceived, if the hopes given to them are not fulfilled, they heave a sigh of despair, a curse. And I have no doubt that if, after all, we play false, the curse of these poor people is bound to descend on us and we shall perish."

Gandhi returned to Bangalore on January 6, for three days' rest. His comrades were in jail and he now felt their void. "It is the first time that I am without Mahadev," he said. In reply to the address presented by the Bangalore municipality, he movingly said: "Your graceful and touching reference to the absence of my wife moves me deeply. We have taken the way that duty has shown us. Her duty has taken her to Yeravda. Mine has brought me here."

From Bangalore he went to Malabar, "the blackest spot on the untouchability map of India." At Palghat, on January 10, he said:

"Early in the morning, I entered Malabar—with due deference to our friends who call themselves sanatanists—the land of iniquities. As I was passing by familiar places, the face of a solitary Nayadi, whom I had seen during the previous visit, rose before my eyes. It was about ten or eleven in the morning when, in the midst of a discussion about untouchability, unapproachability and invisibility, all forms of which are found in no part of the world except in Malabar, a shrill voice was heard. Those who were talking to me said, 'We can show you a live Nayadi.' The public road was not for him. Unshod he was walking across the fields with a noiseless tread. I went out with the friends and saw the Nayadi. I asked him to come and talk to me. Evidently he was frightened and did not know when a blow would descend upon him. Tremblingly he talked to me. I told him that the public road was as much for him as for me. He said, 'It cannot be so. I may not walk on the public road.' I close that scene and ask the sanatanists or anybody else to show me the authority in defence of this inhuman conduct. You will find me smiling with you, laughing with you, and cracking jokes with you, but you may also know that, behind all these jokes and smiles and laughs, the face of the Nayadi and that scene will keep haunting me throughout my tour in Malabar.

"I have come to Malabar to speak out of the very depths of my soul. There are many things in Malabar over which, as you know, I have gone into raptures. You have scenery which is second to none in the world. Man, if he behaves himself, can live an easy life in Malabar. Woman in Malabar is the freest in India. All the women

I have seen in Malabar have a majesty which has commanded my respect. But there is nothing to be proud of in the Malabar untouchability. It is the vilest thing on earth. I want you to wipe out this shame of untouchability from Malabar. If you can do it, the whole of India naturally will follow; and you can do it if you will. I have entered Malabar in high hope. It is for you to fulfil it or frustrate it. Only write down this prophecy in your hearts that, if untouchability as we practise it today lives, Hinduism perishes. I request you to save Hinduism from impending doom. You have the opportunity of making your choice. Make it now or never."

Gandhi was told that the Nayadi problem was not very acute as the Nayadis numbered only four hundred and they were confined to a particular area. "Certainly we do not want them to be millions in number and spread over the whole of India," he said. "But our shame is not any the less because they are few in number. What matters is the spirit that keeps them untouchable and unapproachable and invisible. Even if they were suddenly to become extinct by accident and untouchability in our hearts were still to remain, we should be no better off. Our struggle does not end so long as there is a single human being considered untouchable on account of his birth."

In Malabar Gandhi passed the first night in Guruvayur, a small village, famous for its temple. The people gave him a grand reception but men sent by the sanatanists from the north staged a black-flag demonstration. In the morning, before the meeting commenced two hefty men from among the black-flag demonstrators took possession of the platform and a scuffle ensued. When Gandhi appeared on the scene he found the two men lying senseless and one of them bleeding through the mouth. Gandhi had him immediately sent in a car for treatment and then went through the appointed programme and made a scathing speech:

"Here I want only to say that it was a matter of deep grief to me to find that these two countrymen were hurt, no matter for what cause, and no matter by whom. If any single volunteer or any single person connected with the organization of this meeting had hand in assaulting these friends, I have no hesitation in saying that he has disgraced the cause and has hurt Hinduism, which he considered he was serving.

"I have said repeatedly that this cause of Hinduism can only be served by men and women who are above suspicion and who have

a character to keep and lose. In a movement of self-purification there is no room for any hasty word, for hasty action, for abuse, certainly not for bodily harm. And if there are any persons here present who were instrumental in causing hurt to these countrymen of ours, whose lives should be as dear to you and to me as our own blood relations, then I invite them to purge themselves of that guilt by making a public declaration of their having done this injury and taking the pledge never to repeat such a dishonourable act.

"Keenly and deeply as I feel the taint of untouchability and deeply as I feel convinced that, if this untouchability is not removed root and branch from Hinduism, Hinduism is bound to perish, I would not have untouchability removed by force or show of force or compulsion of any kind whatsoever. Removal of untouchability is not a matter of law or of compulsion, but it is a matter of change of heart, perfect purification on the part of millions of Hindus. And that can only be brought about by the sacrifice of thousands of workers themselves and not by causing injury to other people. Hence has every scripture that I have read pronounced from the house-tops that religion can only be defended by *tapascharya*. I will, therefore, beseech every one of you, who crowd round me wherever I go, to remember that the present movement is a movement of personal, individual self-purification and self-conviction. And if you cannot approach this question from that point of view, I would far rather that I was deserted by you and that all the meetings were deserted by you. And if any man or woman is eager to come and listen to me or to give me an ounce of milk, he or she should do so, provided he or she had got that complete identification with the cause and a perfect spirit of self-purification.

"Having said this and having made this declaration of my faith under the shadow of the great temple of Guruvayur, I would like to make this appeal from the bottom of my heart to those who are organizing the activities of the Varnashram Swaraj Sangh, and the kindred bodies also, to understand that they will not defend what they call Sanatana Dharma by staging demonstrations of the character that they have been doing. They sent a body of young men throughout the tour in C. P. who wanted to fall prostrate before the car and impede my progress at every stage. There were often clashes between volunteers who were looking after me and this body of six or seven young men. Fortunately, no serious or untoward event happened,

though scratches certainly were inflicted on either side even during the C. P. tour. I quickly made friends with those people who were staging those obstructive demonstrations and told them as earnestly as I could that that was not the way to protect Hinduism. Some of them were youngsters, who did not even know what they were doing. With the exception of one, I doubt if any of them had any idea of the elements of Hinduism. I was sorry that hardly had I put my foot in Malabar, when I was faced with the scene that I witnessed here. It would have been better, if I had been able to make their acquaintance before and ascertained what they wanted to do. But they chose to take a different course. I still invite them to meet me and tell me what they would exactly want me to do; and, short of stopping this tour, I would make every facility for them, and every convenience for them to express their thoughts or even to make whatever peaceful demonstrations that they might want to stage. But what I am anxious to avoid is goondaism in every shape and form on the part of either party. I give the same credit to those who call themselves sanatanists for honesty of purpose that I would claim for myself, but both must have an equal right to give expression to their views and mould the public opinion. After all, Sanatana Dharma is not the prerogative of one set of people only. I claim to be a representative of Sanatana Dharma in every sense of the term that they claim. I base my vehement opposition to untouchability upon the same shastras by which they swear, and I should stand by my interpretation of the shastras, even though I were the solitary one amongst the millions of Hindus; because the same shastras tell me that I may not resist the inner call of my fundamental being."

The more the opposition from orthodoxy, the more the response Gandhi received from the people. On January 13, a very touching scene at Badagara prompted him to write an article, in *Harijan*, entitled "Kaumudi's Renunciation".

"It has been my privilege to witness several touching and soul-stirring scenes during a busy life packed with a variety of rich experiences. But at the moment of writing this, I cannot recall a scene more touching than that of the Harijan cause. I had just finished my speech at Badagara. In it I had made a reasoned appeal to the women present for jewellery. I had finished my speaking and was selling the presents received when gently walked up to the platform Kaumudi, a girl sixteen years old. She took out one bangle and asked

me if I would give my autograph. I was preparing to give it, when off came the other bangle. She had only one on each hand. I said, 'You need not give me both. I shall give you the autograph for one bangle only.'

"She replied by taking off her golden necklace. This was no easy performance. It had to be disengaged from her long plait of hair. But the Malabar girl that she is, she had no false modesty about performing the whole process before the wondering public, numbering thousands of men and women. 'But have you the permission of your parents?' I asked. There was no answer. She had not yet completed her renunciation. Her hands automatically went to her ears and out came her jewelled ear-rings amid the ringing cheers of the public, whose expression of joy was no longer to be suppressed. I asked her again whether she had her parent's consent to the sacrifice. Before I could extract any answer from the shy girl, some one told me that her father was present at the meeting, that he was himself helping me by bidding for the addresses I was auctioning, and that he was as generous as his daughter in giving to worthy causes. I reminded Kaumudi that she was not to have the ornaments replaced. She resolutely assented to the condition. As I handed her the autograph, I could not help prefacing it with the remark, 'Your renunciation is a truer ornament than the jewellery that you have discarded.' May her renunciation prove to have been an earnest of her being a true Harijan worker."

At Calicut, on January 16, Kaumudi went to meet Gandhi, along with her father. He wanted to know more about her. Kaumudi had studied up to the intermediate and followed the conversation well. He asked whether she had come to the meeting with her mind made up to make the sacrifice, or she made the decision instantaneously at the meeting.

"She had made up her mind at home," said her father, "and had obtained our permission."

"But, will the mother not feel sorry to see you without any jewellery?" asked Gandhi.

"She will," gently said Kaumudi, "but I am sure she will not compel me to wear it again."

Gandhi: "But when you get married, as in due course you will, your husband will, perhaps, not like to see you without any ornaments. What will you do then? I have a moral difficulty before me.

I have written an article for *Harijan* about your sacrifice which is indeed wonderful. I have said in that article that you would never wear any ornaments again. If you are not prepared for that, I shall have to alter that part of the article; or you will have to stand adamant against even the wishes of your prospective husband. That you a Malabari girl may be capable of doing. Or, you will have to select a husband who will be satisfied to have you without ornaments. You may tell me frankly what you feel."

Kaumudi had to make a momentous decision. She cogitated for a while and then said, "I will select a husband who will not compel me to wear ornaments."

Gandhi's eyes beamed with delight. "I had Annapurna," he said. "She was married and yet she discarded all her ornaments, and she kept her pledge till the moment of her death. Now I have you." He was never tired, since then, of speaking to the women of Kaumudi's sacrifice.

On the evening of January 16, Gandhi left for a short tour through Travancore and Cochin. This was his third visit to this part of the country. He went round the Harijan quarters, some of them built by the state. It did not delude him to believe that all was well there. At Kottayam the address given on behalf of the public was pompous, creating an impression that barring the temple entry the Harijans had every other right, and with their economic uplift they would be on a par with others. "It is a dangerous belief for *savarna* Hindus," he warned, "that nothing now remains to be done for Harijans but temple entry. It is totally wrong to believe that when Harijans are economically lifted, all their woes will be over. You should know that it is the economic uplift of some Harijans that had made them conscious of the degradation to which *savarna* Hindus have reduced them. I would like you to adopt a little humility and admit that there is much to be done in Kottayam itself."

On January 18, at a public meeting in Alleppey, Gandhi made a significant speech:

"Instead of dealing with the several addresses presented here, I deal with the addresses or letters not presented here but showered on me from outside this audience. I hold two letters in my hand. One is a printed letter from Shertalai, and the other a typewritten one, from Alleppey. Now this is how the printed letter starts: 'We beg to state that your present attempt to strengthen the Hindu religion by

removing the evil of untouchability will end in utter failure.' Then follows the advice after this introduction. The second letter has this: 'You are well aware of the fact that the greatest obstacle in the way of the creation of a united Indian nation is religion.' I am not a stranger to this kind of advice. I had letters from Travancore and Cochin even when I was in Poona, ailing. They were all nicely and courteously worded, but strong in their emphasis on the belief that religion was the greatest obstacle in the way of the country's progress. Ever since I have set foot on the Cochin-Travancore soil, I have been flooded with communications of this sort. I cannot possibly disregard these letters. I know that for this belief, which is evidently growing upon some young men in Cochin and Travancore, *savarna* Hindus are primarily responsible. They have dignified irreligion in the name of religion. They have defended sin, as if it was virtue with divine sanction. These young men have felt, in their impatience, that, if religion is as *savarna* Hindus describe it and practise it, religion is an evil. Having become impatient and angered, they have not stopped to think out the question and condemned religion wholesale. If I have real religion in me, I have got to be patient and gentle to these brethren of mine. I have reasoned with them by correspondence and reasoned with them today at Palluruthy.

"I must tell these friends that my present attempt has nothing to do with the strengthening of Hinduism. I ask you to take me at my word when I say that I am wholly indifferent whether Hindu religion is strengthened or weakened or perishes; that is to say, I have so much faith in the correctness of the position I have taken up that, if my taking up that position results in weakening Hinduism, I cannot help it and I must not care. I tell you what I want to do with Hindu religion. I want to purify it of the sin of untouchability and to exorcize the devil of untouchability which has distorted and disfigured Hinduism out of all recognition. If this evil can be removed root and branch, those very friends who say religion is the greatest obstacle to the progress of India will immediately change their minds. But if it is any consolation to these friends, I tell them that if I came to the conclusion that Hinduism sanctioned untouchability, I should denounce it. But even then I would not go so far with them as to say that religion itself is useless and that God is not God but devil. For me, the result will be that I shall lose faith in Hindus and Hinduism, but my faith in God will be strengthened. I want to tell you why

it will be strengthened. Faith is not a delicate flower which would wither under the slightest stormy weather. Faith is like the Himalaya mountains which cannot possibly change. No storm can possibly remove the Himalaya mountains from their foundations. I am daily praying for strength from God to be able to say to God, when Hindus disappoint me, 'Although Thy own creation has disappointed me, I still cling to Thee as a babe clings to the mother's breast.' I want everyone of you to cultivate that faith in God and religion. It is my conviction that all the great faiths of the world are true, are god-ordained and that they serve the purpose of God and of those who have been brought up in those surroundings and those faiths. I do not believe that the time will ever come when we shall be able to say there is only one religion in the world. In a sense, even today there is one fundamental religion in the world. But there is no such thing as a straight line in nature. Religion is one tree with many branches. As branches, you may say religions are many, but as tree, Religion is only one.

"What then is at the bottom of this movement for purification in Hinduism? It is not designed as a movement hostile to any religion. It is designed to bring all the faiths nearer together. Do you for one moment think that, if *savarna* Hindus make reparation in the terms that I have suggested and if they forget the distinctions of high and low, they will forget those distinctions only in regard to Harijans and not in regard to others? Today this poison of untouchability has overtaken the whole of Indian society. Harijans are not the only untouchables. They are on the extreme fringe. But all Hindus are untouchable to themselves and all Hindus to non-Hindus. Non-Hindus have noted this fact; and I suggest to you that all our differences and quarrels today have their main root in this canker of untouchability. I beseech you to believe me implicitly when I say that, if untouchability is removed, it must result in bringing all the Indians together and, if I may say in all humility, all humanity nearer. It is not a small movement, but a very big movement fraught with great consequences. Can you imagine that, if it were otherwise, as a wise man, which I consider myself to be, I would ceaselessly wander from place to place, in the evening of my life, to deliver a message which has the consequence of strengthening the Hindus for fighting against Muslims, Christians, Jews and Parsis, among whom I have friends as dear as blood brothers? I have that implicit faith in my mission

that, if it succeeds—as it will succeed and it is bound to succeed—history will record it as a movement designed to knot all the people in the world together, not as hostile to one another but as parts of one whole."

On the eve of Gandhi's entry into Trivandrum, on January 20, the Travancore state declared open the public roads, wells, *chatrams* to all classes of people. Gandhi congratulated the Government on the step they had taken, but said the reformers could not be satisfied until the state withdrew recognition to untouchability in any shape or form. He heard everywhere he went the wail of those who suffered from social tyranny, and he expressed his anguish in a number of speeches in Trivandrum, Nagercoil, Tinnevelly and in several other places. "Since I have become a Harijan," he said, "I should love to suffer with the Harijans who are supposed to occupy the lowest rung of the ladder even in the Harijan scale. I cannot do so unless I could take out a naturalization certificate, and become a citizen of Travancore."

Divine Wrath

1934

WHILE Gandhi was preaching against untouchability in the south, a great calamity befell the narrow belt at the foot of the Himalayas. The principal earthquake shock, which did a terrific damage to the land in north Bihar and destroyed thousands of lives, occurred on January 15, 1934. The Hindus had gathered in many thousands to bathe in the Ganges, on the occasion of a religious festival. With the Muslims also it was a semi-festival occasion. Precisely at 2.15 p.m., a rumbling began in the air and the earth began to tremble. The shock increased in intensity every second. The earthquake was distinctly felt up to a distance of 1,000 miles. Experts believed that the probable cause of the earthquake was the thrust of the whole peninsula of India northwards against the Himalayas. In less than three minutes whole towns in north Bihar were reduced to ruins, and lakhs of villagers became destitute. The deafening noise and the crash of falling buildings were succeeded at once by a darkness that could almost be felt. It was caused by thick masses of dust, which blotted out the light of the sun and made the air wellnigh unbreathable. Chasms had been formed 200 feet long and 30 feet deep and broad enough for four elephants to walk abreast along the bottom. Sand thrown up from far below the earth's crust lay covering the fields so deep, that ploughs could not even reach the soil; about 65,000 wells and tanks were destroyed or damaged and over ten lakhs of houses met with the same fate. "In the towns of north Bihar there is probably not one masonry house which is altogether undamaged, while many thousands of houses are completely destroyed, with not a wall standing," stated the Governor. The earthquake affected an area of 30,000 square miles and a population of about a crore and half. All communication with the northern side of the Ganges was cut off. Out of nine hundred miles of rail, hardly a mile of track remained undamaged. Rails remained suspended in mid air; bridges were twisted

out of shape and broken down. Shocks of minor character were still going on during the night of January 15 and early on the next morning. The vastness of the sudden catastrophe benumbed the people. The villagers believed that the end of the world had come.

On January 17, the Bihar Government released Rajendra Prasad to enable him to help the earthquake sufferers. On the 21st, Gandhi was informed telegraphically by Rajendra Prasad: "Earthquake has wrought terrible havoc, ruining Monghyr, Darbhanga, Muzzaffarpur and Motihari. The last two districts flooded by waters sprouting from beneath surface. Death casualties anything between ten and fifteen thousand and countless injured. Indescribable damage to property. Appalling suffering." Gandhi was stunned: "I am being crushed to pieces, still I talk, laugh, seem to enjoy, for I have to do that. But I am thinking of it all the twenty-four hours." In a letter to Rajendra Prasad, he wrote: "What shall I write? What comfort shall I give? I have been upset and to give up what I am doing looks like *adharma,* but even if I abandon it, what will I be able to do? Since yesterday I have been narrating the tale of Bihar in every speech to the people. I shall do as you advise."

He took the first opportunity to make a public appeal for funds for stricken Bihar, at the meeting in Tinnevelly, on January 24:

"Before I refer to the proceedings of this morning, I must take the very first opportunity that has occurred to me of making a reference to the great calamity that has descended upon India, I mean the great earthquake that has desolated fair Bihar. I read yesterday the Viceregal communication. I read also the reports of the Government of Bihar that were published in the papers, and I had a most heart-rending telegram from Babu Rajendra Prasad as soon as he was discharged from his prison. All these communications show what puny mortals we are. We who have faith in God must cherish the belief that behind even this indescribable calamity there is a divine purpose that works for the good of humanity. You may call me superstitious if you like. A man like me cannot but believe that this earthquake is a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins. Even to avowed scoffers it must be clear that nothing but divine will can explain such a calamity. It is my unmistakable belief that not a blade of grass moves but by the divine will.

"What are you and I to do in the face of a calamity of this magnitude? I can only say to you that all of us could contribute our mite to

the best of our ability. But I may not be deflected from the purpose to which, as I believe by the direction of God, I have dedicated myself for the few months at my disposal; nor have I the authority to turn from their destination the funds that I am just now collecting from you. But with all the earnestness that I can command, and in the name of the affection which I know you all cherish for me, I must ask you, in spite of your having contributed to this purse, to give all you can save, for the sake of those who are today without shelter, food and clothing in the land of Sita. You must show to your brethren and sisters of Bihar, by sharing your food and clothing with them, that the same blood courses in your veins as in the veins of Biharis.

"In the face of this great calamity over which we have no control, let us now forget that some of us are Congressmen and others are non-Congressmen, that some are Hindus and others are non-Hindus, that some are officials and others are non-officials, and that some are Englishmen and others are not. Let us remember we are all Indians eating Indian grain and salt, and living on the dumb Indian masses. And as such, let us act and work with one will and absolute unity. Let us supplement in a perfectly unobtrusive manner the measures of relief that may be devised by the official world. Remember that time is the most essential element at the present moment. I shall be glad to know that my appeal has not fallen on deaf ears. I want you to remember that not many years ago, when floods had overtaken this fertile land, the whole of India had come to your succour. Now is your turn to run to the rescue of Bihar.

"For me there is a vital connection between the Bihar calamity and the untouchability campaign. The Bihar calamity is a sudden and accidental reminder of what we are and what God is; but untouchability is a calamity handed down to us from century to century. It is a curse brought upon ourselves by our own neglect of a portion of Hindu humanity. Whilst the Bihar calamity damages the body, the calamity brought about by untouchability corrodes the very soul. Let this Bihar calamity be a reminder to us that, whilst we have still a few more breaths left, we should purify ourselves of the taint of untouchability and approach our Maker with clean hearts."

The programme for the first two days in Tamil Nad was heavy, involving a car journey of 107 and 145 miles respectively and a number of meetings and functions to be hurriedly gone through. On the second day, heavy rains and sharp winds added to the trouble,

and on January 25 Gandhi reached Madura at 11.15 p.m., some five hours late than expected. The next day Gandhi called the organizers and pleaded against "the mad rush". "This will cut me to pieces," he remarked. "I have also other work to do, and I do not want it to go to the dogs. Don't make me run after purses. I also want to meet the workers, know their difficulties, and acquaint myself with the work they are doing. The present programme leaves no time for that. The tour is not designed only to collect money. I may even go to places where there is no purse to be had but which are otherwise important for the cause." Thakkar Bapa, Gandhi's companion and colleague, prevailed upon him to stay for a week, at Coonoor in the Nilgiris. But Gandhi knew no rest. From early morning till late at night, he was busy with the piles of letter that had accumulated during the hectic tour. A correspondent wired: "Will you not lay aside untouchability and go to Bihar? Must the Mahatma fiddle while Bihar is burning?" Gandhi replied: "Perhaps I am serving her best by remaining at my post. Those also help who know how and when to wait." Another critic said that he should use the Harijan collections for Bihar relief. "It would be a clear breach of trust on my part," said Gandhi, "if I listened to the advice. We may not afford to be unnerved in the face of great calamities."

In an article, "Bihar and Untouchability", he wrote in *Harijan* of February 2:

"I share the belief with the whole world, civilized and uncivilized, that calamities such as the Bihar one come to mankind as chastisement for their sins. And when that conviction comes from the heart, people pray, repent and purify themselves. I regard untouchability as such a grave sin as to warrant divine chastisement. I am not affected by posers such as 'why punishment for an age-old sin' or 'why punishment to Bihar and not to the south' or 'why an earthquake and not some other form of punishment'. My answer is: I am not God. Therefore, I have but a limited knowledge of His purpose. Such calamities are not a mere caprice of the deity or nature. They obey fixed laws as surely as the planets move in obedience to laws governing their movement. Only we do not know the laws governing these events and, therefore, call them calamities or disturbances. Whatever may be said about them must be regarded as guess-work. But guessing has its definite place in man's life. It is an ennobling thing for me to guess that the Bihar calamity is due to the sin of untouchability.

It makes me humble, it spurs me to greater effort towards its removal, it encourages me to purify myself, it brings me nearer to my Maker. That my guess may be wrong does not affect the results named by me. For what is a guess to the critic or the sceptic is a living belief with me, and I base my future actions on that belief. Such guesses become superstitions, when they lead to no purification and may even lead to feuds. But such misuse of divine events cannot deter men of faith from interpreting them as a call to them for repentance for their sins. I do not interpret this chastisement as an exclusive punishment for the sin of untouchability. It is open to others to read in it the divine wrath against many other sins.

"Let the anti-untouchability reformers regard the earthquake as nemesis for the sin of untouchability. They cannot go wrong, if they have the faith that I have. They will help Bihar more and not less for that faith. And they will try to create an atmosphere against reproduction of untouchability in any scheme of reconstruction."

Gandhi's utterances on the earthquake brought a sharp rejoinder from Rabindranath Tagore. "It has caused me a painful surprise," exclaimed the poet, "to find Mahatma Gandhi accusing those who blindly follow their own social custom of untouchability, of having brought down God's vengeance upon certain parts of Bihar, evidently specially selected for His desolating displeasure. It is all the more unfortunate, because this kind of unscientific view of phenomena is too readily accepted by a large section of our countrymen. I keenly feel the indignity of it, when I am compelled to utter a truism in asserting that physical catastrophies have their inevitable and exclusive origin in certain combination of physical facts. Unless we believe in the inexorableness of the universal law in the working of which God Himself never interferes, we find it impossible to justify His ways on an occasion like the one which has sorely stricken us in an overwhelming manner and scale.

"If we associate ethical principles with the cosmic phenomena, we shall have to admit that human nature is morally much superior to Providence that preaches its lessons in good behaviour in orgies of the worst behaviour possible. For, we can never imagine any civilized ruler of men making indiscriminate examples of casual victims, including children and the members of the untouchable community, in order to impress others dwelling at a safe distance, who possibly deserve more severe condemnation. Though we cannot point out any

period of human history that is free from iniquities of the darkest kind, we still find citadels of malevolence yet remain unshaken, that the factories that cruelly thrive upon abject poverty and ignorance of the famished cultivators, or prison-houses in all parts of the world where a penal system is pursued, which, most often, is a special form of special criminality, still stand firm. It only shows that the law of gravitation does not in the least respond to the stupendous load of callousness that accumulates till the moral foundation of our society begins to show dangerous cracks and civilizations are undermined. What is truly tragic about it is the fact that the kind of argument that Mahatmaji used by exploiting an event of cosmic disturbance far better suits the psychology of his opponents than his own, and it would not have surprised me, if they had taken this opportunity of holding him and his followers responsible for the visitation of divine anger. As for us, we feel perfectly secure in the faith that our sins and errors, however enormous, have not enough force to drag down the structure of creation to ruins. We can depend upon it, sinners and saints, bigots and breakers of convention. And we, who are immensely grateful to Mahatmaji for inducing by his wonder-working inspiration, freedom from fear and feebleness in the minds of his countrymen, feel profoundly hurt, when any words from his mouth may emphasize the elements of unreason in those very minds—unreason, which is a fundamental source of all the blind powers that drive us against freedom and self-respect."

In reply, Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* of February 16:

"When at Tinnevelly I first linked the event with untouchability, I spoke with the greatest deliberation and out of the fullness of my heart. I spoke as I believed. I have long believed that physical phenomena produce results both physical and spiritual. The converse I hold to be equally true.

"To me, the earthquake was no caprice of God, nor a result of a meeting of mere blind forces. We do not know the laws of God nor their working. Knowledge of the tallest scientist or the spiritualist is like a particle of dust. If God is not a personal being for me like my earthly father, He is infinitely more. He rules me in the tiniest detail of my life. I believe literally that not a leaf moves but by His will. Every breath I take depends upon His sufferance.

"He and His Law are one. The Law is God. Anything attributed to Him is not a mere attribute. He is Truth, Love, Law, and a million

things that human ingenuity can name. I do believe with Gurudev in the exorableness of the universal law in the working of which God Himself never interferes. For, God is the Law. But I submit that we do not know the Law or all the laws fully, and what appear to us as catastrophes are so only, because we do not know the universal laws sufficiently.

"Visitations like droughts, floods, earthquakes and the like, though they seem to have only physical origins, are, for me, somehow connected with man's morals. Therefore, I instinctively felt that this earthquake was the visitation for the sin of untouchability. Of course, sanatanists have a perfect right to say that it was due to my crime of preaching against untouchability. My belief is a call to repentance and self-purification. I confess my utter ignorance of the working of the laws of nature. But, even as I cannot help believing in God though I am unable to prove His existence to the sceptics, in like manner, I cannot prove the connection of the sin of untouchability with the Bihar visitation even though the connection is instinctively felt by me. If my belief turns out to be ill-founded, it will still have done good for me and those who believe with me. For we shall have been spurred to more vigorous efforts towards self-purification, assuming, of course, that untouchability is a deadly sin. I know full well the danger of such speculation. But I would be untruthful and cowardly if, for fear of ridicule, when those that are nearest and dearest to me are suffering, I did not proclaim my belief from the housetop. The physical effect of the earthquake will be soon forgotten and even partially repaired. But it would be terrible, if it is an expression of the divine wrath for the sin of untouchability and we did not learn the moral lesson from the event and repent of that sin. I have not the faith that Gurudev has that 'our own sins and errors, however enormous, have not good enough force to drag down the structure of creation to ruins.' On the contrary, I have the faith that our own sins have more force to ruin that structure than any mere physical phenomenon. There is an indissoluble marriage between matter and spirit. Our ignorance of the results of the union makes it a profound mystery and inspires awe in us but it cannot undo them. But a living recognition of the union has enabled many to utilize every physical catastrophe for their own moral uplifting.

"With me the connection between cosmic phenomena and human behaviour is a living faith that draws me nearer to God, humbles

me and makes me readier for facing Him. Such a belief would be a degrading superstition, if out of the depth of my ignorance I used it for castigating my opponents."

With a stern sense of duty he continued his Harijan tour in the south. "How much have you collected?" asked a correspondent towards the close of the tour. "Up to 2nd March, Rs. 3,52,130-9-7 had been received during the tour," he explained. "Three account-keepers travel with the party and they work day and night under the direct control of Thakkar Bapa, the ever-vigilant secretary of the central board. More often than not, they have to burn midnight oil, in order to cope with thousands of copper and silver pieces and to tally cash from day to day. These moneys are all sent to the central board at Delhi and there safely banked. Accounts are audited and produced before the board meetings from time to time."

"How do you propose to spend that money?" asked an inquisitive American. "In constructive work and not for propaganda," Gandhi answered.

On the night of March 9, the tour was cut short and Gandhi left for Patna. "Whilst anti-untouchability work is undoubtedly greater and its message of a permanent character," he observed, "like all the chronic diseases, it can dispense with personal attention in the face of an acute case which that of Bihar is. He who is called by Rajendra Babu, the physician in charge, has to answer the call when made or not at all. When, therefore, the call came, I had to suspend the tour. But I want to assure anti-untouchability workers in the provinces not visited, that I hope to resume the tour as soon as the circumstances will permit. Let the workers beware!"

In Stricken Bihar

1934

GANDHI reached Patna, the centre of relief work, on March 11, 1934, two months after the earthquake shock had occurred.

It was not a tour of mere sympathy or help, but it was a tour of education. An excellent account of what his tour meant to the earthquake-stricken people of Bihar was given by Miss Agatha Harrison, a prominent British social worker: "It was said that the poverty of the men and women was at zero, the earthquake had divided this by ten. I passed through Japan after the 1923 earthquake, and there is no doubt in my mind that this is the greater disaster. How can I describe these two days to you? With the exception of a few miles of route in the outlying districts we drove between walls of people. As we neared a village or town, these human walls would press in almost to the point of suffocation in an effort to see this much-loved man, Mahatma Gandhi. Sometimes through sheer fatigue he would curl up on the seat and sleep and I would talk with Rajendra Prasad. As we neared a village, and the motor slowed down, Rajendra Prasad on one side, and the chauffeur on the other, would lean out and call out softly in Hindustani, 'He sleeps.' And these words would be echoed by the people. But even this did not deter them from pressing around the car, though quite quietly, in an effort to see Mr. Gandhi. From my vantage point I saw the expression on their faces, and was dumb. For it was as though they had seen a god. Our days were all punctuated by meetings at which Mr. Gandhi and often Rajendra Prasad would speak. But I have never seen anything like the surge of people at these meetings. Often, on the edge of the crowds, there would be a fringe of elephants bearing a far too heavy burden—so great was the anxiety to see this apostle of non-violence."

March 12 was his day of silence. The people flocked in thousands round the house, where he was staying, and went also to the evening prayer with overjoyed hearts. On the next day he tried to see some-

thing of the destruction wrought in Patna, but the crowds were so great as to make it impossible even to get down from the motor-car in which he was being taken round.

On March 14 Gandhi, accompanied by Rajendra Prasad, motored down to Motihari. The road, when the Ganges was crossed, was still very rough and broken. On the way they stopped at Lalganj, to see cracked and crumbling buildings. They started off again in order to reach Motihari, which was sixty miles away, before nightfall. It took them over seven hours to reach the destination.

On the way Gandhi addressed the villagers: "There is one thing I want to say to you. Those of you who are getting work from the central relief committee are in honour bound to work well. Do good honest work; and you who are not already working should do so. To give money, for bad work, or for no work, is to make beggars. And you must put away untouchability from your hearts and lives."

Just as darkness was descending, they began to enter the tracts damaged by water and sand. At one place they were confronted by a mound of earth with a warning that a bridge was down. They had to make a detour across the fields and over a temporary bridge, which almost gave way under them. At last they reached Motihari, dead tired, long after nightfall.

The next morning they were off at six o'clock to see the countryside. They had three rivers to cross with ferries in twenty-five miles, and then came back through what had once been fields. Deserts of sand now met their eyes on every side, and even where there was a standing crop, it had been blighted by the sand. The land everywhere had been perforated with craters. The water had by that time dried up, but the sand remained. It was lying everywhere, very fine and glistening.

Everywhere as they passed along the road, or stayed on for a few moments, the crowd collected, and the cry of "Gandhi Mahatma-ki-jai" issued. When he spoke at all, it was always the same message: "Work, work, do not beg, but work; ask for work to do, and do it faithfully."

There were already over 10,000 people employed by the central relief committee in one district alone through which he passed. The work given to the people was that of clearing away the sand. Their daily wages were incredibly low—two annas for a man, one anna for a woman, half anna for a child.

On his way back to Motihari, Gandhi was taken to see the worst fissures. One was deep and broad enough to contain a dozen or more elephants within its chasm. Besides the fissures and the craters and the sand-blocked waterways the land had bulged up in some places. In others there had been a sinking of the soil.

In the afternoon, Gandhi went round the town of Motihari. The whole town was broken and twisted and shapeless beyond all repair. Almost every house was damaged. In the evening, all the representatives of the different relief committees, including the Government officials, gathered together for a conference in Motihari. Gandhi expressed great pleasure at seeing the cordial co-operation and pointed out to the Congress relief workers that it was their bounden duty, in order to help the sufferers in their utmost needs, to study the work and capacity of the other relief organizations, especially that of the Government, and to fit their own work in by taking up those where prompt action was required.

Addressing the people of Motihari, he said: "This is no time for talking. I have come to see and help you, and not to talk. But there are just two things I want to say to you. The first is this. The relief committees have the money, and either beggars or workers will take it. And I want no beggars. It would be deplorable, if this earthquake turned us into mendicants. Only those without eyes, or hands, or feet, or otherwise unfit for work may ask for alms. For the able-bodied to beg is, in the language of the Gita, to become thieves.

"The second thing is this, that God has Himself sent us this gift. We must accept it as a gift from Him, and then we shall understand its meaning. What is that meaning? It is this, that untouchability must go, that is to say, nobody must consider himself higher than another.

"If we can understand these two things, this earthquake will be turned into a blessing. At present we count it as a sorrow, and no wonder when we see these fair fields and lands devastated. But I pray to God that He may give us strength to make a blessing out of this destruction."

Gandhi went from place to place, inspecting the relief work and giving instructions. His very presence cheered the people, who for the moment forgot their distress and raised arches and decorations, made out of bamboo and green foliage, to give him a loving welcome. Everywhere crowds thronged to see and hear him. He spoke to them

in simple Hindi, asking people to put all their energy in reconstruction and reminding them all the while of the curse of untouchability. Addressing a monster meeting of over 30,000 people, on March 27, at Chapra, he reiterated his belief in the underlying connection between nature's physical manifestations and the moral being of man. He said:

"Today a terrible calamity has overwhelmed us all alike—Hindus, Musalmans, Christians and the rest, the so-called high-born and the low-born, without any favour or distinction. If even this terrible blow does not enable us to purge ourselves of pride of place and blood, to obliterate all the arbitrary, man-made distinctions between man and man, then I would only say that there is none so ill-fated as we. The conviction is growing upon me day after day that human intellect is incapable of fully understanding God's ways. God in His wisdom has circumscribed man's vision, and rightly too, for, otherwise man's conceit would know no bounds. But whilst I believe that God's ways cannot be comprehended fully by man, I have firm faith that not a leaf falls without His will, and not a leaf falls but it subserves His purpose. If only we had enough humility, we would have no hesitation in accepting the recent earthquake as a just retribution for our sins. This is not to say that we can with certainty attribute a particular calamity to a particular human action. Very often we are unconscious of our worst sins. All that I mean to say is that every visitation of nature does and should mean to us nature's call to introspection, repentance and self-purification. Today, more than ever, our hearts need a thorough cleansing and I would go so far as to say that even the earthquake would not be too great a price to pay, if it enabled India to cast out the canker of untouchability."

From Chapra he proceeded to Muzaffarpur by train in the afternoon of the 28th. Platforms of the wayside stations were everywhere packed. People eager for *darshan* mounted the footboards of his compartment. And to avoid accidents, the train had to be stopped at several places and the footboards cleared. At Sonepur station the train made a fairly long halt and the waiting crowd insisted on hearing Gandhi. Standing in the doorway, he proceeded to speak: "I know what this part of Bihar has gone through. The sufferings of the people have drawn the attention and sympathy of the whole world. In spite of liberal response to the Viceregal appeal and that of Babu Rajendra Prasad, it will be impossible to make good the tremendous

losses suffered by north Bihar. But even if they were made good, it would be a very poor result of nature's recent terrible warning, if nothing more substantial were to come out of it. The donors of the two funds and the numerous other societies have perhaps satisfied their conscience by sending in their donations. Will the recipients be satisfied by merely receiving their share of the timely gifts? What is your reaction to the divine wrath? If you and I do not learn the moral lesson which the calamity teaches us, then that neglect will be worst than the calamity itself. Yesterday, as the car was passing along the Gandak embankment, I received a note from the Doms of the village close by, telling me that they were suffering terribly from want of water, as the villagers would not allow them to take water from the common well. I drew the attention of the headman to the note and he promised to put the thing right, if it was found that their complaints were justified. God's wrath was felt equally by the rich and the poor, the Hindu and the Musalman, the caste man and the outcaste. Shall we not learn from God's terrible impartiality that it is criminal to consider any human being untouchable or lower than ourselves? If a single Dom or any other human being is denied the use of the village wells, surely, the lesson of the 15th of January will have been lost upon us. I want to test you this very moment. I know you are all poor, earning bread by the sweat of your brows, but I know that there is in this vast crowd none so poor as not to be able to afford a pice. I want every one of you to contribute your coppers as a sign that you have repented of the sin of untouchability, that you do not consider anyone lower than yourselves, and that in your own persons you are determined to abolish all distinctions of high and low. I do not want any of you to give me anything except on the condition I have made." Immediately after the speech, the audience began to put silver and copper coins in Gandhi's hands. It continued till the train began to move.

On the way, until he reached Muzaffarpur, Gandhi reiterated the purport of his message delivered at Sonepur, and at every station he collected copper coins as a token of people's sympathy to the Harijan cause. Having reached Muzaffarpur station at seven in the morning, he straight motored down to a meeting to deliver the message of anti-untouchability and collect funds. Early next morning, January 29, he left for Sitamarhi, an important relief centre in the Muzaffarpur district, where most of the workers from Gandhi's ashram were then

posted. There he came to know that a Muslim relief worker was experiencing difficulty because of the practice that prevailed among the Hindus of regarding as polluted any food that was touched by a non-Hindu. Referring to this practice, he said: "Is it not shocking to regard the touch of a Musalman or a Christian as unclean, even though he may be as truthful, god-fearing, pure, self-sacrificing and brave as any? God has created different faiths just as he has the votaries thereof. How can I even secretly harbour the thought that my neighbour's faith is inferior to mine? As a true and loyal friend, I can only wish and pray that he may live and grow perfect in his own faith. In God's house there are many mansions and they are all equally holy. All the great religions of the world inculcate the equality and brotherhood of mankind and the virtue of toleration. The 'touch-me-not'ism that disfigures the present-day Hinduism is a morbid growth. It only betrays a woodenness of the mind and a blind self-conceit. It is abhorrent alike to the spirit of religion and morality."

At Darbhanga, Gandhi made a fervent appeal for the abolition of untouchability, as a measure of self-purification and social reform. Referring to the allegorical story of the elephant and the alligator, he reminded the audience that the visitations of nature were the inevitable—however long delayed they may be—consequence of our sins and they were intended to rouse us from our spiritual slumber. "Nature utters its warning to us in a voice of thunder," he concluded. "It flashes it before our eyes in letters of flame. But seeing, we see not, and hearing, we do not understand." He warned the people that if they failed to pay heed to nature's signals, the nature would exact her due with compound interest.

Leaving Darbhanga on the morning of March 31, he arrived at Madhubani at noon. The programme here included a flying visit to Rajnagar, a place full of temples and palaces, now reduced to a mass of ruins. "As I viewed the picture of ruin spread out before me at Rajnagar," he said at Madhubani, "I felt overwhelmed and crushed by the weight of human misery. But, then, I remembered Kunti's prayer, 'Oh Lord, send me misery and misfortune always, lest I forget thee.' It may not be given to all of us to have Kunti's Himalayan faith to utter that prayer. But may we not at least learn from it the lesson of using our calamities as a means of self-purification and turning the mind godward?"

The rest of the tour through the Bhagalpur district was a record journey, Gandhi having covered 110 miles by car in the course of a single day over difficult roads. From far and near within a radius of about ten miles, men and women, who had never seen him before, flocked in their thousands for his *darshan*. There were gatherings of fifty to sixty thousand people at half a dozen places. He delivered no speeches to them. The number of people who came that day for his *darshan* was about four lakhs.

At Saharsa, where Gandhi halted on his silence day, a crowd of fifty to sixty thousand people laid seige to the bungalow where he was staying, from eight in the morning. The whole day they squatted round outside of the compound fence, without food or water, in the midst of heat and dust. Towards the evening, their number swelled to over a lakh, whom Gandhi addressed a few words. On April 3 he reached Monghyr, where two thousand houses were razed to the ground and ten thousand persons were killed. Addressing the stricken people he said: "Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that the Biharis were specially marked by nature for its attention because they were more wicked than the rest. Misfortune is not a proof of an individual's wickedness. All the same, there is an indissoluble connection between natural calamities and man's sin. You cannot have an interruption of the moral law in one part without producing a reaction in the entire system. When one limb is afflicted, through it the entire body is punished. Every calamity should, therefore, lead to a thorough cleansing of individual as well as social life."

Leaving Monghyr, he re-entered the Patna district, rushing from one place to another. At Burhee, the sanatanists greeted him with black flags. He regretted the growth in Sanatana Dharma of these tactics of the politician. "I have never been able to associate black flags and Sanatana Dharma together in my mind. The combination seems so excruciatingly grotesque." He warned the sanatanists that indulgence in these tactics would not redound to their credit. He stood for toleration for all, even for the black flags. "Let no one," he pleaded, "feel angry over the black flags or try to snatch away the flags from their owners. Mutual courtesy and respect was the foundation of culture." He invited everybody to join with him in the race for the exercise of that virtue. He could not understand how a *dharma* that boasted of having produced a Tulsidas could sanction a practice which condemned an entire section of humanity to a life

of abasement and inferiority. "Kindness is the foundation of all religions, pride the parent of all sins," had sung Tulsidas. He commended that text to them all, to remember and reflect upon.

After inspecting the devastated area in north Bihar and thinking over again the reconstruction work of the future, Gandhi presided over a meeting of the all-India committee of the central relief work, and moved the following resolution from the chair: "This committee tenders its respectful co-operation to the Government in prosecution of the common object of relieving the unparalleled distress that has overtaken Bihar."

Although, he was himself a confirmed non-co-operator, he had no doubt whatsoever that on this occasion they should offer their co-operation to the Government, and if they did so it must, of course, be offered respectfully. He held this view, because he felt that in the present crisis there was no other course but co-operation open before them. In view of the magnitude of the work, they could not do without the Government's assistance, just as the Government could not do without their help. The crisis was well calculated to bring them all together, and banish, for the time being, all differences, political and racial. According to the non-official estimates twenty thousand and, according to the official records, many thousand people had lost their lives. All differences were hushed and old enmities forgotten on the cremation ground. They worked today not as Congressmen but as humanitarians. Throughout his recent tour he never had the occasion even to mention the name of the Congress. They had but one object and that was the service of the stricken people.

On April 4, Dr. Ansari, Bhulabhai Desai, and Dr. Bidhan Roy arrived at Patna, to secure Gandhi's support for the tentative decisions taken at a conference in Delhi. The conference had decided to revive the Swaraj Party for participating in the forthcoming elections. Independently of the Delhi decisions, Gandhi had made up his mind of suspending "the civil resistance for swaraj". He, therefore, welcomed the revival of the Swaraj Party, though his views on the utility of the legislatures remained "as they were in 1920." In a statement issued from Patna on April 7, he said:

"This statement was drafted by me at Saharsa on my day of silence, that is, Easter Monday, the 2nd. I passed it on to Rajendra Babu and then it was circulated among the friends who were present. The original draft has undergone considerable revision. But in

essence it remains as it was on Monday. The decision and every word of the statement are in answer to intense introspection, searching of the heart, and waiting upon God. The decision carries with it reflection upon no single individual. It is a humble admission of my own limitations and a due sense of the tremendous responsibility that I have carried on my shoulders all these long years.

"This statement owes its inspiration to a personal chat with the inmates and associates of Satyagraha Ashram. More especially is it due to a revealing information I got in the course of a conversation about a valued companion of long standing who was found reluctant to perform the full prison task and preferring his private studies to the allotted task. This was undoubtedly contrary to the rules of satyagraha. More than the imperfection of the friend, whom I love more than ever, it brought home to me my own imperfection. The friend said he had thought that I was aware of his weaknesses. I was blind. Blindness in a leader is unpardonable. I saw at once that I must for the time being remain the sole representative of civil resistance in action.

"During the informal conference week at Poona in July last, I had stated that, while many individual civil resisters would be welcome, even one was sufficient to keep alive the message of satyagraha. Now, after much searching of the heart, I have arrived at the conclusion that in the present circumstances only one, and that myself and no other should, for the time being, bear the responsibility of civil resistance, if it is to succeed as a means of achieving Purna Swaraj.

"I feel that the masses have not yet received the full message of satyagraha due to adulteration in the process of transmission. It has become clear to me that spiritual instruments suffer in their potency when their use is taught through non-spiritual media. Spiritual messages are self-propagating. The reaction of the masses throughout the Harijan tour has been the latest forcible illustration of what I mean. The splendid response of the masses has been spontaneous. Workers themselves were amazed at the attendance and the fervour of vast masses whom they had never reached.

"Satyagraha is a purely spiritual weapon. It may be used for what appear to be mundane ends, and through men and women who do not understand it spiritually, provided the director knows that the weapon is spiritual. Every one can't use surgical instruments. Many may use them, if there is an expert behind them directing their use.

I claim to be a satyagraha expert in the making. I have need to be far more careful than the expert surgeon who is a complete master of his science. I am still a humble searcher. The very nature of the science of satyagraha precludes the student from seeing more than the step immediately in front of him.

"The introspection prompted by the conversation with the ashram inmates has led me to the conclusion that I must advise all Congressmen to suspend civil resistance for swaraj, as distinguished from the specific grievances. They should leave it to me alone. It should be resumed by others in my lifetime only under my direction, unless one arises claiming to know the science better than I do and inspires confidence. I express this opinion as the author and the initiator of satyagraha. Henceforth, therefore, those who have been impelled to civil resistance for swaraj under my advice, directly given or indirectly inferred, will please desist from civil resistance. I am quite convinced that this is the best course in the interests of India's fight for freedom.

"I am in dead earnest about this greatest of weapons at the disposal of mankind. It is claimed for satyagraha that it is a complete substitute for violence or war. It is designed, therefore, to reach the hearts both of the so-called 'terrorists' and the rulers who seek to root out the 'terrorists' by emasculating the whole nation. But the indifferent civil resistance of many, grand as it has been in its results, has not touched the hearts of both. To test the truth of the proposition, satyagraha needs to be confined to one qualified person at a time. The trial has never been made. It must be made now.

"Let me caution the reader against mistaking satyagraha for mere civil resistance. It means relentless search for truth, and the power that such a search gives to the searcher can be pursued by strictly non-violent means only.

"What are the civil resisters, thus freed, to do? If they are to be ready for the call whenever it comes, they must learn the art and the beauty of self-denial and voluntary poverty. They must engage themselves in nation-building activities, such as the spread of khadi through personal hand-spinning and hand-weaving, the spread of communal unity of hearts by irreproachable personal behaviour towards one another in every walk of life, the banishing of untouchability in every shape or form in one's own person, the spread of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks and drugs by personal contact

with the individual addicts, and generally by cultivating personal purity. These are the services which provide maintenance on a poor man's scale. Those for whom the poor man's scale is not feasible should find place in small unorganized industries of national importance which give better wages. Let it be understood that civil resistance is only for those who know and perform the duty of voluntary obedience to law and authority."

In conclusion Gandhi said that it was mere advice to those who looked to him for guidance in matters of satyagraha: "I am in no way usurping the function of the Congress." Dr. Ansari hailed the statement and observed that the dual programme, fight both within and without the legislatures, would remove the prevailing political inertia. To Jawaharlal Nehru the news came in prison "with such a stab of pain, I felt the chords of allegiance that had bound me to him for many years had snapped." This was the reaction of many Congressmen though in the heart of hearts they knew that the people were in no mood to continue the struggle and the movement had to be suspended sooner or later. The Government attitude was expressed in the Assembly by Sir Harry Haig : "The Government propose to raise no obstacle to a meeting of the A.-I.C.C. or, if Congress leaders so prefer, of the Indian National Congress for the purpose of ratifying the statement of policy recently made by Mr. Gandhi and calling off civil disobedience."

Some weeks later, Gandhi discussed his statement threadbare with the Congress leaders at Ranchi. Among those present were Asaf Ali, Rajagopalachari, Dr. Ansari, Rajendra Prasad, Mrs. Naidu, Dr. B. C. Roy, Bhulabhai Desai, Jamnalal Bajaj, K. M. Munshi, Deepnarayan Singh, Mathuradas Tricumji, and K. F. Nariman.

Gandhi: "Sarojini Devi told me that it was generally understood that I had advised the complete suspension of civil disobedience on the part of the Congress. Then, I would say that it is not so. If this is the interpretation put upon my statement, it is the imperfection of my language, but this is not what I have sought to convey. Dr. Ansari, Bhulabhai, and Bidhan know what is at the back of my mind."

Bhulabhai: "They don't mean to say that this is what the statement conveys, but that this is what it ought to be."

Gandhi: "Sarojini Devi said that the interpretation put upon my statement in Bombay was that there would be a suspension of civil

disobedience on behalf of the Congress, and that my civil disobedience would be quite individual. It is not so."

Bhulabhai: "The wish is father to the thought. Many people read into it that meaning. The two conceptions are quite distinct. They read that meaning in hope. Please see if it may be possible to remove the wrong impression by another statement."

Gandhi: "Is it the impression also among those that are here? Is it your desire that the Congress should wash its hand of civil disobedience as restricted to me?"

Bhulabhai: "Will you offer it in the name of the Congress?"

Gandhi: "Yes."

C. R.: "Is the Congress going to disown him?"

Bhulabhai: "There is a third, middle course. It may be possible to persuade Gandhiji not to treat it as the Congress disowning him but as his releasing the Congress from it?"

Gandhi: "It would be possible, if it was my advice that civil disobedience should be undertaken by me not on behalf of the Congress but on my own account."

Bhulabhai: "It may be possible to put it to Gandhiji as the desire of the Congress, 'Will you please relieve us? We are unable to bear the burden.' "

Asaf Ali: "I have understood your statement to mean that you have relieved the Congressmen; and since you say that civil disobedience should be according to your own conception, you have confined it to yourself. The Congress has faith in civil disobedience, but we can't say so about the modification of it."

Gandhi: "Under these circumstances the Congress should free itself altogether from this."

Asaf Ali: "Civil disobedience must remain in our armoury. But the present is not the time to use it, nor does it seem likely to come in the immediate future. You should, therefore, not use that weapon now."

Deepnarayan Singh: "The Congress would wish not to reject but to suspend it."

Gandhi: "I will explain later why I have given this advice. But what I wish to know just now is whether my language is capable of bearing the interpretation I am now putting on it."

Deepnarayan Singh: "We have taken it to mean complete suspension of civil disobedience."

Gandhi: "If the people have interpreted it in this way, it would be a different matter altogether. A sense of relief there is, because they have come to know that they have no longer to offer civil disobedience. 'He will go to prison. It is enough if one man goes to jail on our behalf,'—if the sense of relief is due to this feeling, it is one thing. But it would be quite a different thing if the sense of relief is due to the feeling, 'He will go on offering it himself; but we are free from it.' After Sarojini Devi spoke to me I asked myself if there was anything in my statement to justify this interpretation. I read the statement once again at three o'clock last night. I have nowhere said in it that the Congress should suspend civil disobedience. In fact, I have assumed that the Congress is not prepared for complete suspension. In Poona it was definitely against it. If the Congressmen wish to get out of it altogether, I must respect their wish, and you may disown me. It would, in my opinion, be detrimental to the Congress prestige. I said so at Poona also. If there is violence and it goes on increasing, we can suspend civil disobedience; but we cannot suspend it because our number is small. We should carry on civil disobedience, even if there is one satyagrahi left. If the adviser says, 'I have nothing left now and even I am unable to offer civil disobedience,' then we can do something else. But I do not feel that I cannot offer civil disobedience. I feel no despondency in me. I do feel that it can be still more powerful in certain circumstances. One of them is that civil disobedience is confined to me. I want to do this as the Congress expert on this subject. The Congress is responsible for civil disobedience. But finally I am responsible. I am not feeling helpless. I cannot suspend it in my own person, nor can the Congress. The Congress dare not suspend it. The Congress must not suspend it, because thousands of persons have ruined themselves in this movement. What answer shall we give to them? And what reward? Are you afraid that the Congress will still be treated as illegal? But there is something much more powerful."

Deepnarayan Singh: "They will not like to disown you, and yet they want to suspend this civil disobedience for a time."

Gandhi: "You can't have both the things together. If the Congressmen have that desire and yet do not want to disown me, I may withdraw from the Congress. There are two instances of a similar nature. I might have become a member of the Servants of India Society. But it came to votes and I withdrew. I said, 'I don't want to

divide the house.' The second instance refers to the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad. Some people wanted to elect me as the president of the *parishad* in 1926, and there was the controversy over the proposal. Munshi brought the matter to me. I said, 'I don't want to enter any rivalry. It is unthinkable.' "

Bhulabhai: "The Government did not put the two propositions together; it was the newspapers that did so."

Munshi: "My impression is that they want the A.-I.C.C. to do nothing more than endorsing Gandhiji's statement. If you don't do so, it will be a vote of censure, whether you wish it or not."

Gandhi: "There are some Congressmen who want to go further. I have, in my statement, advised the Congress to restrict civil disobedience to me. Now the suggestion is that I should practise it in my own person but not in the name of the Congress. If that is the desire of the bulk of the Congressmen then I would give that advice without dividing the A.-I.C.C. on the question."

Bhulabhai: "That is precisely what I want to say."

Gandhi: "I want to know two things: first, whether I am misunderstood; secondly, whether it is the desire of the bulk of the Congressmen that I should go further than this."

Bhulabhai: "If the word 'effectively' means endorsing your statement, Congressmen would be too glad."

C. R.: " 'Effective' means something more."

Gandhi: "It is quite likely that the Government may say that this is not enough."

C. R.: "They had a doubt as to whether a majority of Congressmen would accept the advice. Let us only think whether we want to disown Gandhiji."

Gandhi: "The Congressmen don't want to disown me. They want this accommodation from me. If that is so, I must give them that accommodation. If there is such a desire on the part of a majority of Congressmen, I must do so."

C. R. : "Does it not mean that they don't want civil disobedience at all?"

Gandhi: "No, I won't go so far as to say that. An honest man would say, 'I can't understand one man doing it. If you have invincible faith, you may do it. If you show results, we shall come to it.' That many can't understand it, I can see. But my hope is that many don't have that feeling. Having seen brilliant results, they would say,

'We can't possibly give it up.' If I give up civil disobedience, I would be denying myself. There are some Congressmen who wish to tell me, 'You should not isolate yourself from the nation; and, therefore, you too should give up civil disobedience.' The U. P. Congressmen have said this."

Dr. Ansari: "They prohibit you just now, but say, 'When you go forward, take us with you.' "

Bajaj: "In any case he is not going to jail just now—at least not till August."

Gandhi: "The resolution in effect means to say, 'Your advice is good. But you should go one step further and suspend civil disobedience completely. When in future we go that way, we will all go together.' (To Mrs. Naidu) Grannie, you were right about those two women, and I was staggered."

Nariman: "I want civil disobedience to be given up as the official programme of the Congress."

Bidhan Roy: "Nariman says that in accordance with your statement, it will be the official programme of the Congress."

Gandhi: "Civil disobedience is still the official programme of the Congress."

Nariman: "Can you give us the formula you will place before the A.-I.C.C.?"

Gandhi: "My formula will be: 'Having read Gandhi's statement carefully, and having heard his explanation, the A.-I.C.C. endorses the advice tendered by him to restrict civil disobedience to himself, provided that when and if he has the proposal for the extension of the programme of civil disobedience, the A.-I.C.C. reserves the right of accepting it or not. The A.-I.C.C. asks all other Congressmen to follow his advice and suspend civil disobedience.' It will not be a blank card given to me. Every time I have something, I shall come to the Congress. You don't pledge yourselves as to the future. You reserve your right to accept my advice or reject it. The Congress has a perfect right to offer civil disobedience. I say you should not do so just now. The Congress may not do so till the expert does not advise. All energy will thus be husbanded instead of being frittered away and wasted. The nation has got energy of which you have no conception, but I have. I don't want to put an undue strain on the energy. Those who want to go to jail may retain the desire and prepare; and if and when I am ready, I shall come to the Congress, if I am alive.

Civil disobedience will be wholly unnecessary, if the constructive programme is followed out. The parliamentary programme will also form part of the Congress programme, supposing the members of the Congress who go to the councils are not going there for their personal ends. If a communal settlement is achieved, if untouchability is removed, if there is an Indian sober instead of an Indian drunk, and if we build up universal cottage industries in India, there will be no occasion for civil disobedience. My civil disobedience will cover everything. My civil disobedience will be enough even after swaraj is achieved. The only difficulty lies in convincing people that this way lies swaraj. And your parliamentary programme will be nugatory, if the Hindu-Muslim unity is not achieved. You will be in a turmoil."

Nariman: "How will this decision contribute to the parliamentary programme?"

Gandhi: "It will contribute by releasing your energy. I cannot go into the councils. I am a red rag to the bull. My silence has contributed more than my words. My words have lost their power. I know I shall give a good account of myself when the time comes."

Nariman: "Is this dual programme not inconsistent—civil disobedience confined to one individual on the one hand, and parliamentary work on the other?"

Gandhi: "It is absolutely consistent. The law-maker is no good, if he is not also a law-breaker."

Nariman: "I can understand the same individual doing the two things at different times. But how can an organization do both the things at the same time?"

Gandhi: "Yes, it would be very difficult, but not impossible. If the Congress does not endorse my statement, you will be rendered impotent, and you will be asked to give up position after position. If you say, with your back to the wall, 'Thus far and no further,' no Government can defy you."

Bhulabhai: "You can make a good law and break a bad one. This distinction is unnecessarily verbal."

Nariman: "Are we to have a dual programme with two parts opposite to one another?"

Gandhi: "Are they really opposite?"

Nariman: "We shall have two sections—one making, and the other breaking, laws. Why should there be a hurry for council entry at this stage?"

Gandhi: "If I were in your place as lover of the country, I would say, 'We do believe in council entry.' I tried to see if we could have such a strong mentality in the Congress that no one would think of the councils. But I find that we have a large body of men looking to the councils. I will not call it a weakness. It is a felt want in the country. I called it a weakness while I was hoping about keeping out this mentality from the Congress. But I could not keep it out. Every time it errupts. I realized the situation. I goaded Dr. Bidhan Roy. I said, 'I advise you to form a party.' I gave similar advice to Asaf Ali, Satyamurti and Abhyankar. I said to them, 'In the councils you will be able to swear at the Government.' 'But we are swearing at the Government,' they said, 'when we are in jail.' 'But you can't go to jail,' I answered, 'because you don't believe in individual civil disobedience. When mass action comes, you will, of course, be there.' I am for prosecuting the constructive programme. I am not a believer in the councils. But if I were, I would be the first member of the Swaraj Party."

On Foot

1934

AT MIDNIGHT of April 10, 1934, Gandhi entered Assam and in the morning of the 11th he addressed a meeting at Rupsi:

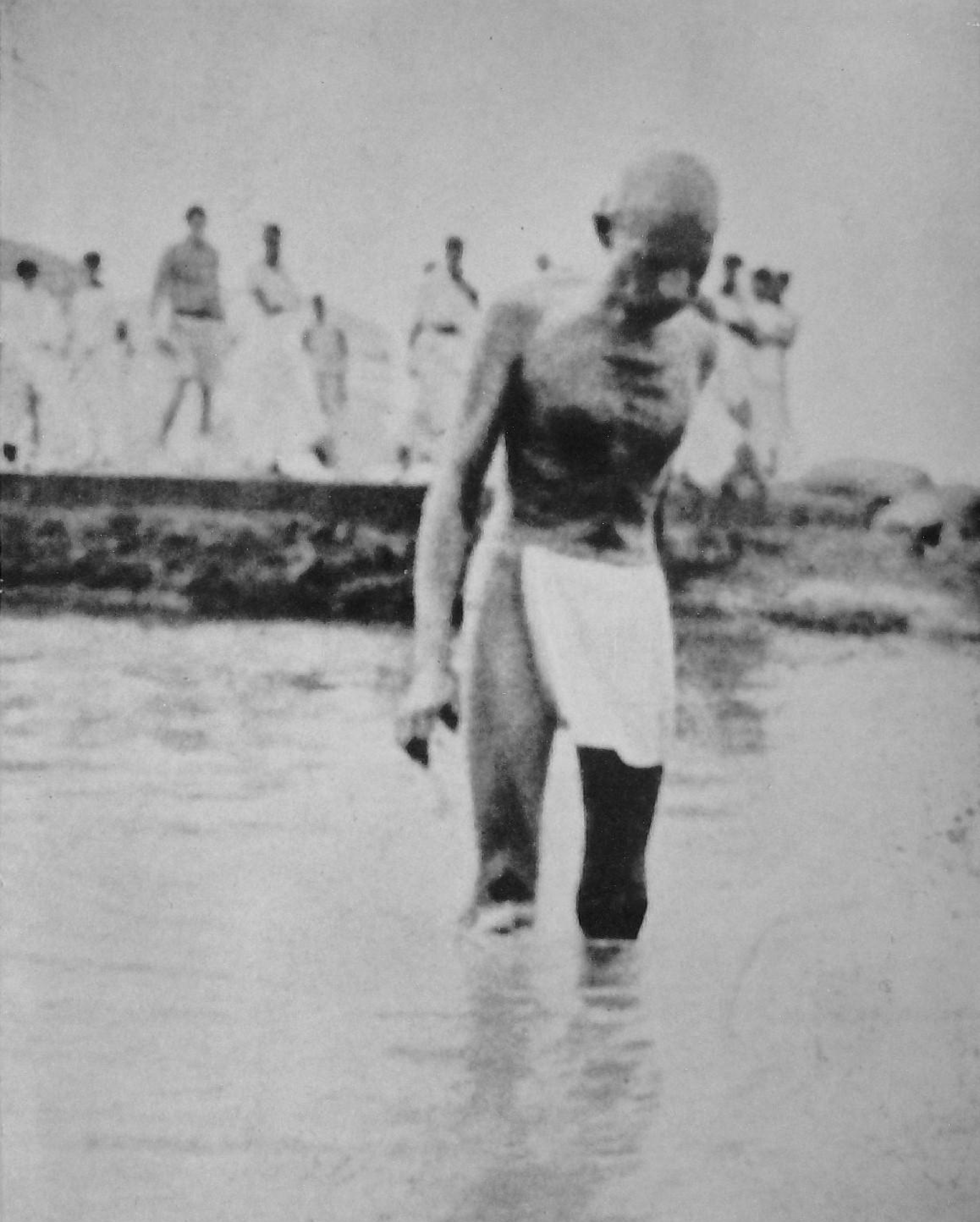
"I am glad to be again in Assam after a very long period. This time my mission is in connection with the Harijan movement. It is said that there is no considerable untouchability in Assam and Bengal. But I do not think that statement squares with facts. For, we are guilty of untouchability as soon as we make distinctions between man and man and have grades of high and low. Surely there are distinctions enough in Assam. And those against whom distinctions are drawn feel them just as keenly as any in the other parts of India. Then you look down upon the Doms and bhangis and *chamars*, who come here from other provinces, as lowest among the low. And it is a common thing for almost all classes to consider themselves superior to some other castes and to treat the Musalmans, Christians and others as untouchables in some way or other. The removal of untouchability implies that we shall get rid of all this high-and-lowness and accord equal treatment to all human beings as children of one and the same God, and thus have real brotherhood of man. I have no hesitation in saying that there is no warrant in our shastras for the untouchability that I have described to you and what we are practising more or less all over India. I ask your blessings and co-operation in this, one of the noblest of all causes."

Gandhi gave two weeks to Assam and collected over Rs.17,000. His farewell speech was touching. He said that he did not set much store by money as such. It was, therefore, perhaps, that he had the reputation of being an expert beggar. He wanted money only if he could carry with it the hearts of the donors. If a single donor gave him one crore of rupees, he could not abolish untouchability; but he could undertake the task without a single pie, if he could carry with him the hearts of one crore of Caste Hindus. Let them know what he

meant by the removal of untouchability. No human being could be unclean by birth. If they would search for unclean things, they had only to dive into their own minds, where they would find a multitude of evil thoughts worthy of being treated as outcastes. Bathing was very well, but even buffaloes had long daily baths. "He only is pure who walks in the fear of God and serves His creatures."

Then they had a special untouchable in Assam. That was opium. It was stunting their growth. Medical evidence went to show that, if the opium habit was not given up, it would extinguish the Assamese. Harijans were a prey to the habit just as much as the others. He implored the cultured men and women to deal with the problem. In conclusion he appealed to the people of Assam to pay special attention to the labourers from other provinces, who were miscalled coolies and who were treated worse than Harijans. He visited almost all the important towns of Assam including Tinsukia, a tea-garden labour centre, where thousands of labourers poured from different gardens, factories and mines to hear and see him. The collections amounted to Rs. 19,000 in cash, Rs. 1,511 in jewellery.

On April 25 he commenced the Harijan tour in south Bihar. The sanatanists followed him with black flags, and on the 26th at Jassidi, they broke the rear glass pane of his car. He got down and walked alone a distance of one mile in heat through a throng of sanatanists. Referring to the demonstrations at Deoghar, he said: "It is a great pleasure to me to be able to re-visit this holy place. My ancestors had visited it. But I admit that I was not fired with the same kind of motive that they had. You may not also know that this was one of the places where, on my return from South Africa to India, in 1915, I was invited to open the ashram. During my last visit all the *pandas* were volunteers, lavishing their affectionate services on me and my party. They knew that I had the same convictions about untouchability that I have today. They knew, too, that there was hardly any meeting at which I did not speak on untouchability in those days. But, on this occasion they are divided into two camps; one serving me and my party, and the other, be it ever so small, resisting me. I know it is not given to man to retain the affection of all men for all time. It is, therefore, neither a matter for surprise nor sorrow that some of my old friends, the *pandas*, I find in the opposite camp. But the manner of resistance is a matter for deep grief to me. I suppose they are responsible for the circulation of leaflets full of half-truths

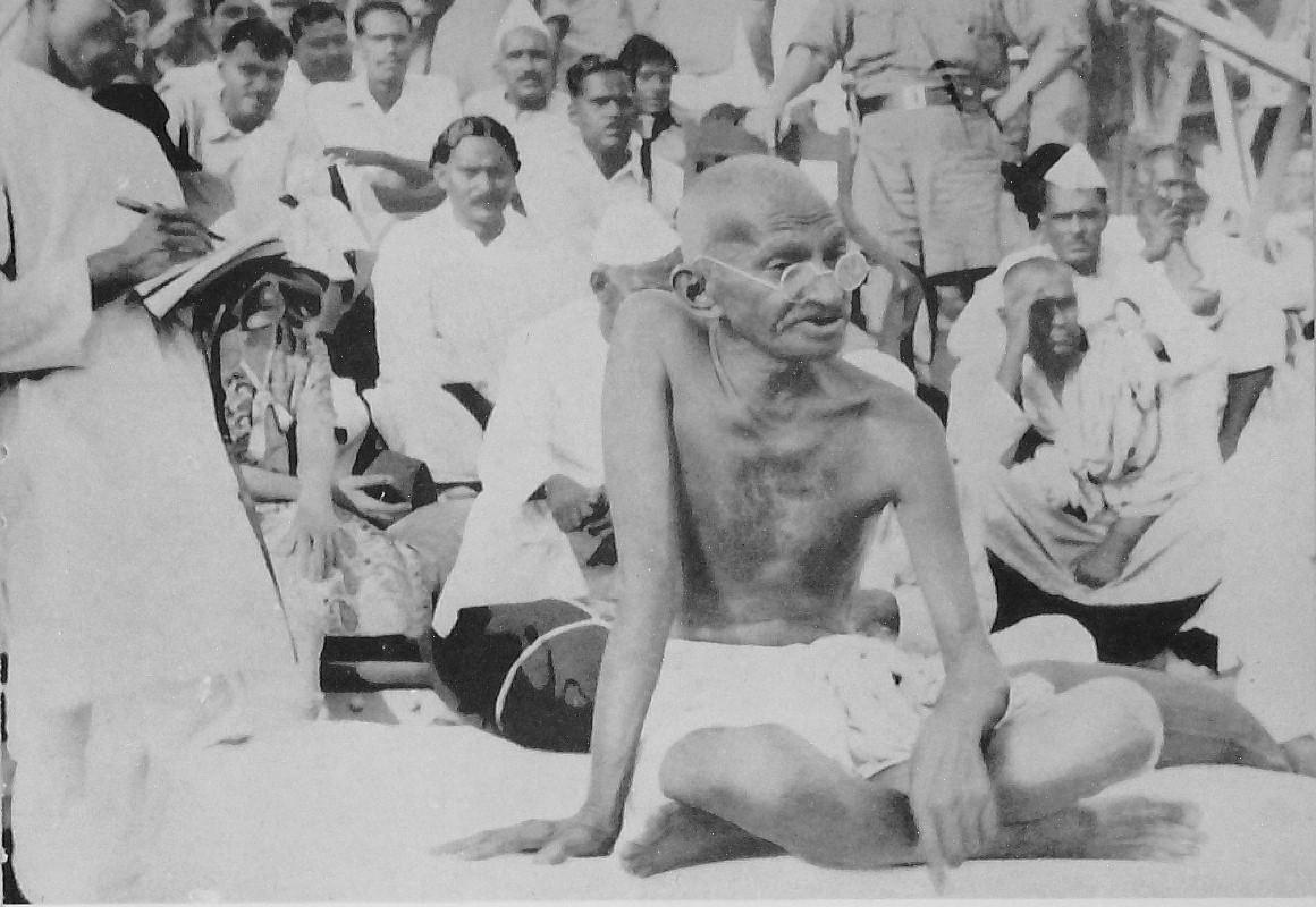


From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi entering the sea for a bath at Cape Comorin, January 1934

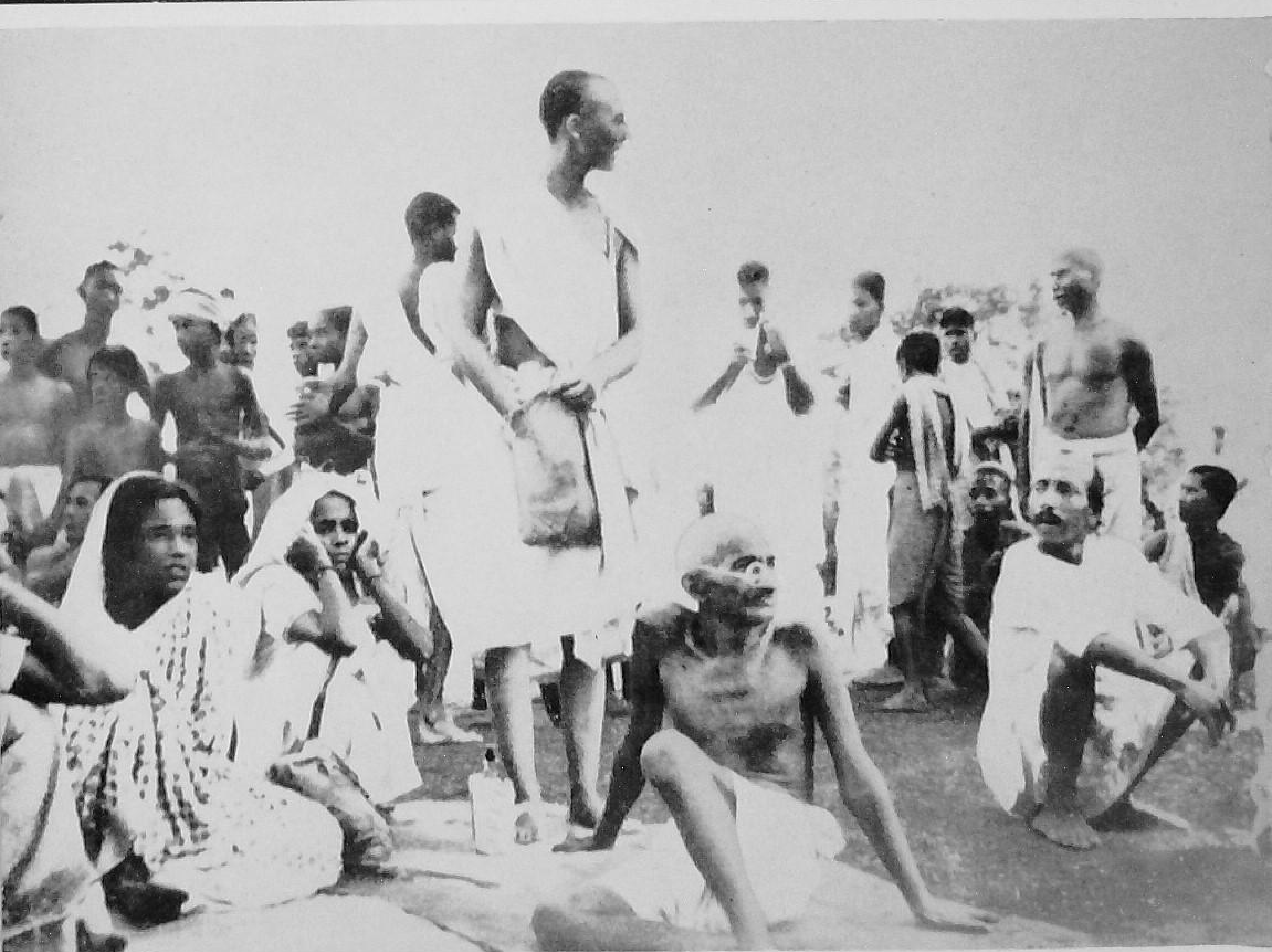
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

While swimming in the sea at Cape Comorin, January 1934



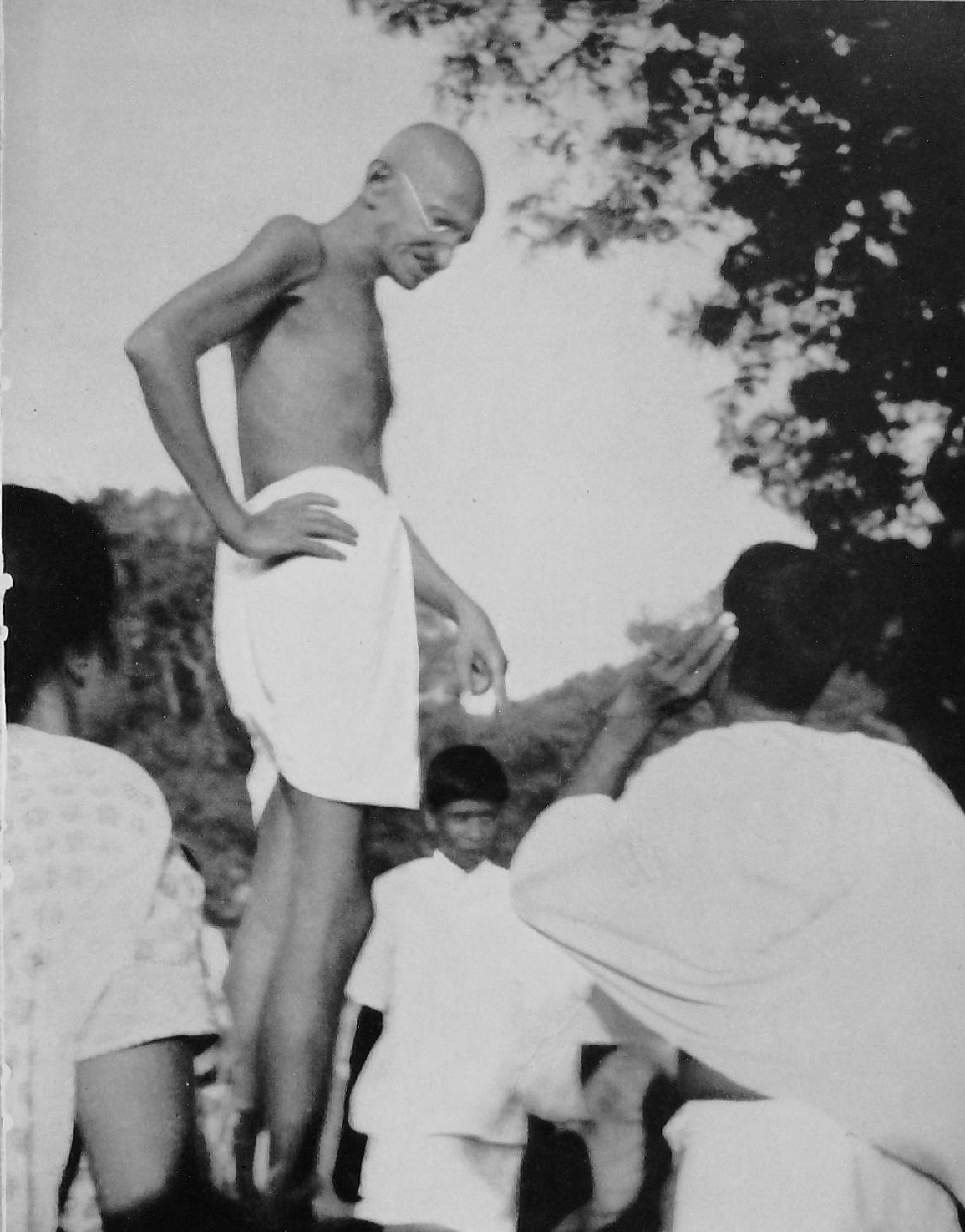
Gandhi in stricken Bihar, Hajipur railway station, March 1934 *Courtesy : K. K. Chatterjee*

During the Harijan tour in Assam, April 1934 *Courtesy : N. Jasani*



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi writing for *Harijan* during the railway journey to Orissa, May 1934
During the Harijan tour of Orissa on foot, on the way to Bhadrak, May 1934

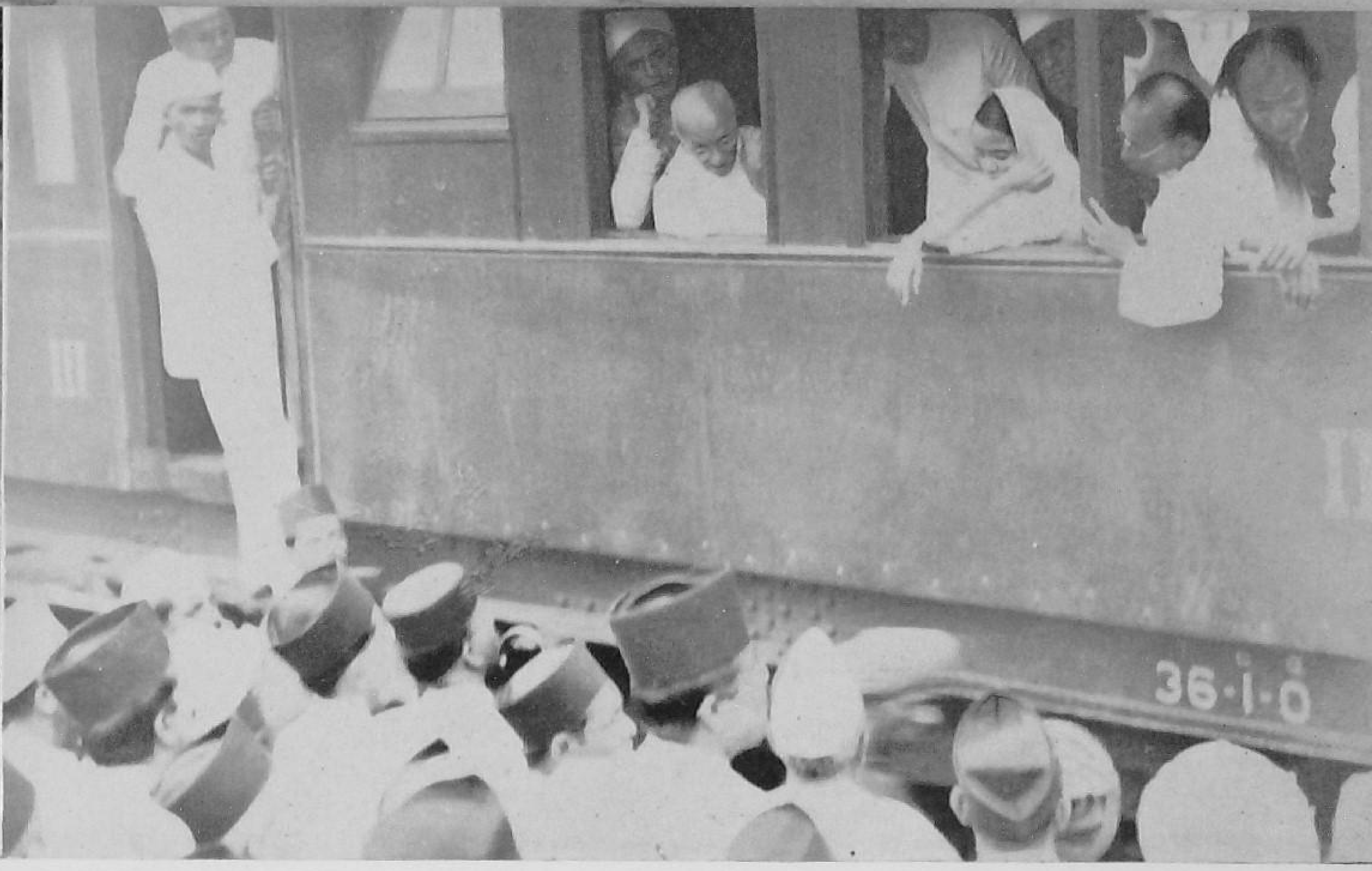


Courtesy : N. Jasani

Gandhi at Bhadrak, May 1934

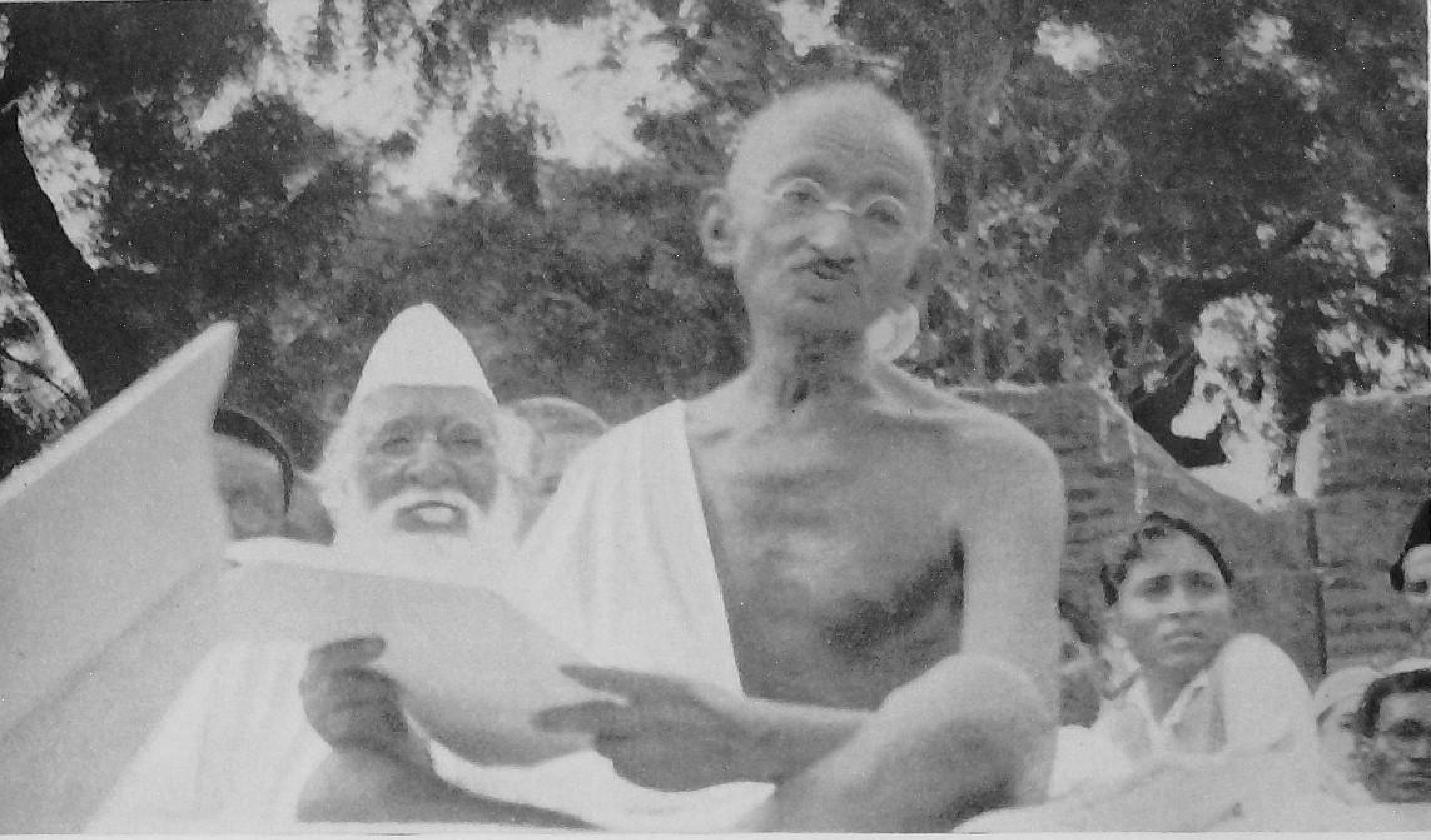
Courtesy : R. R. Diwakar

In a car during the Harijan tour



Courtesy : N. R. Phatak

Gandhi during the Harijan tour in Gujarat, June 1934
With Harijan children at Bhavnagar, July 1934



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi addressing a meeting in Bhavnagar, July 1934

Gandhi collecting money for Harijan Fund on a railway platform, Kathiawad, July 1934

and untruths about myself, designed to wean the people from me. Decency of language has been thrown to the winds.

"I utterly disbelieve in methods of compulsion. I seek to bring people round to my view of truth by an appeal to their reason and to their hearts. I have tried, therefore, to discover the cause of the opposition and I have failed, unless it be that the public opinion is fast changing and untouchability is on its last lap and that therefore, by hook or by crook my tour should be brought to a standstill, no matter how scrupulously fair my means may be of converting the Hindu opinion."

Gandhi reached Ranchi at the end of April and had very strenuous four days in the town. On May 4 he left for a tour of Orissa, which began with Jharsaguda. On the 7th he wrote an article, "Shall it be on foot?":

"Daily the idea is growing on me that I should finish the balance of the Harijan tour by walking, as far as it may be possible. The idea has gripped me especially after the Deoghar incident. I know that those who are resorting to the violent method are to be counted on one's fingers' ends. But even the fewest can disturb the meetings. I would love to demonstrate to them in every way that the movement is essentially religious in conception and execution. I am anxious, too, to show that it does not depend for its spread upon swift locomotion. A suggestion that I should use aeroplane was dismissed as soon as it was made. Nor need anyone run away with the idea that the tour has been undertaken for the sole purpose of collecting funds. I am certain that both the men and women and money that may be necessary for the cause will be forthcoming even though I may be walking. It is likely that, if my message comes from the heart it will travel faster on foot than by rail or motor.

"And then I am tired of the terrific noises, though they are an expression of the people's affection and joy at seeing me. They jar on my nerves, which have now become too weak to bear them. I am equally tired of the hustling that has become my daily lot. For the essential truth of the message to soak into the people, it has to be delivered to silent and listening crowds. Religious truth, or for that matter any truth, requires a calm and meditative atmosphere for its percolation."

At Puri, on May 8, Gandhi entered upon the second phase of the Harijan tour by renouncing the use of conveyances for the rest of

the Orissa tour, and going to the public meeting on foot through the crowded streets of the city. Addressing the people he said that he was happy that his walking tour would commence from Jagannathpuri, where all Hindus received the *prasad* of the Lord of the Universe on a footing of perfect equality. The walking tour emphasized the spiritual nature of the Harijan movement. His own experience, fortified by a study of history, had convinced him that all conveyances, even the bullock carts, not only did not help but hampered the free operation of spiritual forces. The work before them was so arduous and the canker of untouchability had taken such a deep root in their body politic, that all the renunciation and *tapas* that they were capable of were required for its removal. Hence did the idea grow upon him from day to day that he should give up trains and cars and content himself with what he could do on foot, so far as the delivery of the message was concerned. But at Vaidyanath the idea simply gripped him. He had long realized that his body must ever be resigned to the tender mercies of the people, and he felt that if God still intended his body as an instrument of service, His arm was long enough to defend it against all designs upon it. It would be painful to him if he had to have resort to conveyances in order to save his skin. Whilst the police did their duty, he could not help feeling ashamed that they had to defend him against possible mischief. All these considerations had weighed with him in coming to the present decision. If there was vital truth in the message he was delivering, it should be self-luminous and self-propagating and reach millions by the sheer force of thought. If, therefore, the results were not what he expected, he would question his own worthiness for the mission, rather than question the truth of the mission. He would start for the villages of the Puri-Cuttack road the next day. People were welcome to join him in his pilgrimage, but they must not try to touch his feet or crowd round him. They must walk behind the pilgrims, never ahead or abreast of them, and obey their instructions. They must not make noise, but march in peace, and they must make their own arrangements for food and shelter. They must not be any burden on the villagers.

From Puri he marched on the morning of 9th to Harikrishnapur, a typical Oriya Brahmin village, granted in perpetuity to Brahmins by the ancient rulers of Orissa. On the route the sanatanists staged a black-flag demonstration while the Harijans showered flowers and welcomed him with conch shells. Addressing the audience, he said

that the walk to their village had given him great pleasure. He was glad that he was following the ancient tradition. But if it were to bear fruit, he must have the fullest co-operation. They must abolish the system of having one quarter for Brahmins, another for Harijans and so forth, and accord to Harijans all the rights and privileges enjoyed by the rest of the Hindus. He appealed to all to cast out their indolence, and gin, card, spin and weave cotton during their long leisure hours.

From Harikrishnapur, he walked in the evening to Chandanpur, a distance of three and a half miles, thus completing eight miles that day. On reaching the destination, he said his prayers and addressed the assembled on untouchability. The Harijan collections of the day amounted to Rs. 140.

In the morning of May 10, Gandhi and his party tramped five and a half miles to reach Kadua, and in the evening they walked three miles, spending the night at Virpurshottampur. Addressing himself specially to the Brahmins of the village, he said: "A true Brahmin should be the very image of humility, and not be proud of his knowledge or wisdom. A Brahmin would cease to be a Brahmin if he thought himself superior to others, as it was his duty to instruct the people to look upon a Brahmin and a bhangi with an equal eye. Again, a Brahmin was hardly worth the name, if he did not have the courage of his convictions. We must fear the Lord and none else. Cowardice was incompatible with divine wisdom. It would not do to say that sinful people could not be allowed to enter temples. Temples were like spiritual hospitals, and the sinful, who were spiritually diseased, had the first right to be ministered unto by them. Temples are for the sinners, not for the saints. And who is to judge where no man is without sin?"

The tour on foot simplified matters: morning walk and meeting, evening walk and meeting. The "rush through space" was over. After the morning prayer and breakfast, Gandhi started each day at half past five and reached his day-time camp by half past seven, before the blazing heat of the day had set in. The camp was sometimes a villager's house and yard, but more often a mango or a palm grove. One or two members of the party were regularly sent ahead to make arrangements. The shadiest part of the grove was chosen; here, with some bamboos and matting, sheltering screens were put up against the dusty wind; holes for the kitchen fire were dug, a pit for refuse

and, some way off, small trenches were dug for latrines which were then surrounded with matting. Sometimes there were one or two tents for Gandhi and his party. Cleanliness was strictly observed. All leavings from the kitchen and other rubbish was thrown into the pit which was covered up with earth. The villagers, who crowded round the camp, were given a practical demonstration in hygiene.

As soon as Gandhi arrived in the camp, he addressed the people gathered, and the party took up bathing, washing and cooking. The meeting over, Gandhi settled down to writing. The party stayed in the camp throughout the day, and exactly at half past five, after taking the evening meal, they set out again for the night halt. On the way many hundreds joined them and accompanied them. The first thing on arrival, as in the morning, was the meeting, preceded by ashram prayers. After the meeting, the party slept on the ground under the sky, getting up between three and four in the morning.

A vivid picture is depicted by Mirabehn: "We had left the camp at the usual hour, 5.30 p.m. It was nearly 7.30 and the night had closed in. As we neared our destination, men with lanterns came out and met and escorted us along the last mile or so of the road. All along the way, the band of marchers had been increasing and by now numbered several hundreds.

"Lights ahead, glittering through the trees, told us that the meeting place was near, and a big crowd standing on the road marked the side-track down which we had to go.

"That night a palm grove had been chosen. One low table with a white cloth on it served as a platform, and here and there amongst the trees lights had been strung up. On all sides rose the tall slender trunks of the palm tree, overhead their feathery tops waved against the star-lit sky, and below, on the sandy soil, sat hundreds of villagers who had gathered there from far and near.

"In a few minutes perfect silence prevailed, except for the gentle rustle of the wind in the palm leaves. Amid this scene, the evening prayer began. At the close of the prayer, in that atmosphere of peace and purity, Gandhiji delivered his message. 'Awake, arise and realize the sin which you have inherited and harboured. Purify Hinduism, or it and we perish.' "

Describing a moving incident, she wrote: "The evening march is in progress. All along the way, lines of eager villagers are standing, waiting for Gandhiji's arrival. Here is an extra big crowd and they

have spread across the road. A dear old woman, with white hair, and her eyes dimmed with age, suddenly rushes hither and thither and amongst the people. 'Where is he? Where is he? I must see him.' In her agitation she is about to miss him, when Gandhiji, noticing her distress, stops and calls her. She comes eagerly towards his voice and peers at him with her old eyes. 'Well, well,' says Gandhiji laughingly, and putting his hand under her chin, 'Can you now see me properly?' Her joy knows no bounds, and twining her arms round his neck, she lays her head on his breast and is lost in bliss. He gently disengages her arms, she passes back into the crowd as one in a dream, but the light remains with her, illuminating her aged face."

There was another incident penned by Mirabehn.

"I am ready for the barber", said Gandhi, and in was brought a little village woman with shaving tackle all complete.

"Hallo! This is very good, are you going to shave me?" inquired Gandhi laughing.

She answered with a smile and began sharpening her razor in a business-like way. She shaved his chin and his head also, entirely to his satisfaction.

During the process Gandhi's eye fell on her ornaments. Though a poor woman, she was wearing, beside some lacquer bracelets, a pair of large silver bangles and a gold ornament in her nose.

"What are these wretched things?" he asked. "They don't make you beautiful. Indeed, they are ugly and harbour dirt."

The poor woman looked sorrowful. "I borrowed them especially for this auspicious occasion," she exclaimed. "I could not come before you without good ornament!"

Gandhi reasoned with her. She listened, smiled sweetly, that was all. She went away, shaved other members of the party and, when she had received her wages, quietly went and placed them in front of Gandhi before departing.

On the sixth day of the tour Gandhi wrote: "By train and car I would have covered probably 750 miles and would have nominally seen 150,000 people at least. On foot I have covered not more than 40 miles, the sixth day being my silence day, and come in touch with not less than 20,000 men and women. My innermost feeling is that the work done is in inverse ratio to that between the artificial locomotion and the natural. The contact during the past five days has been more real between the villagers and myself."

"The purpose of this note," he said, "is to invite co-operation of the whole of India. It was no small thing for the Utkal leaders all of a sudden to disturb the programme. They had no hesitation, when the truth burst upon them, in sacrificing the pecuniary gain. I expect no difficulty from the other provinces. I must refuse to believe that they will fail to see the superior beauty of the walking tour over that of the train and motor travel."

Appealing to Harijan workers, he wrote: "I expect the all-India workers to arrange simultaneous walking tours in their own provinces for the purpose of delivering the message and even collecting coppers and silver pieces from the people by way of purses to be sent to me, as they would have given me if I had gone to them. There should be more intimate touch established between the workers and Harijans and friendlier approach to the sanatanists. There should be a more real appreciation of the difficulties and disabilities of the Harijans in the villages visited. There should be more temples opened, more Harijan children brought to public schools. Let the workers and the villagers believe that, inasmuch as I am walking to the Utkal villages, I am walking to theirs also. If mine is a spiritual act, it should have that value, the people should feel impelled to intensify their effort on behalf of the Harijan cause. This pilgrimage on foot should result in the discovery of more workers and the increasing dedication of the existing ones."

On May 15, at Balianta, he performed the ceremony of opening a temple to all the Hindus, including Harijans, and, in doing so, he set forth his own ideal of a temple. He hoped that the trustees would endeavour to make the temple a living reality. Temples, in his opinion, were a reflection of the state of the society for whose use they are built. The temples of yore were said to have had such a moral atmosphere round them that the worshippers felt elevated and, for the time being, shed all their evil thoughts. Then, one found on these temple grounds primary schools for boys and girls. And they had pundits attached to them who imparted Sanskrit learning to seekers. They were abodes of refuge for the poor who would always be sure of finding shelter for the night, and they had commodious rooms or open spaces for the assembly of elders. That was the ideal surrounding of ancient temples. In his wanderings, he had seen temples where one or more of the institutions he had described were to be found. There was no difficulty in carrying out the programme he suggested, if the

trustees meant it. Nor was there a question of large funds. The school might be a palm grove, the hall might consist of mother earth below and open sky above. The question, therefore, was one of will and sufficient men of purity and strength of character. He hoped that such men would be forthcoming.

On May 16 he addressed a mass meeting of the citizens of Cuttack and then walked four miles to the station to catch the train for Patna, to attend an important session of the A.-I.C.C.

The two-day session of the A.-I.C.C. discussed the decisions taken by the Swarajists at Ranchi. Dr. Ansari moved the resolution accepting Gandhi's plan adumbrated in his statement, in regard to the suspension of civil disobedience and reserving the right of satyagraha to himself on behalf of the Congress. Many amendments were moved but all of them were defeated by overwhelming majorities. Gandhi moved the resolution on council entry. The resolution stated that as there was a vast body of members in the Congress who believed in the necessity of entry into legislatures, as a step in the country's progress towards its goal, a parliamentary board consisting of not more than twenty-five Congressmen with Dr. Ansari as president be formed. The board was to conduct the elections for the legislatures on behalf of the Congress with the power to raise and administer funds for carrying out its duties. The board must elect only such candidates as would be pledged to carry out in legislatures the Congress policy as determined from time to time. Moving the resolution, Gandhi said that he was opposed to council entry but he was letting Congressmen contest the elections because those Congressmen, without such work, would be unoccupied from the Congress point of view. He also pleaded that all Congressmen should not follow the council entry programme. Many amendments, which were aimed at stiffening of the council entry programme, were moved and speaker after speaker urged the house to defeat the resolution. The strongest opposition to the council entry programme was put up by the socialist group, led by Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan. Gandhi's reply to the debate, which took him more than an hour, enabled him to defeat all the amendments to the original resolution.

"I strongly hope that the majority will always remain untouched by the glamour of council work," said Gandhi. "In its own place it will be useful. But the Congress will commit suicide, if its attention is solely devoted to legislative work. Swaraj will never come that way.

Swaraj can only be achieved through an all-round consciousness of the masses."

On May 20, Gandhi left Patna to resume Harijan tour in Orissa. Early in the morning of the 21st, he got down at Byree station and went on foot to the Gandhi Seva Ashram at Champapurhat, where he intended to spend the two days of his weekly rest. The ashram maintained a dispensary on its grounds, which provided him with a theme for his speech at the evening meeting. He said he could not realize the need for a dispensary attached to the ashram. It was not right to depend on drugs as a cure for ailments, nor for workers lazily to dole out drugs to the villagers. Diseases could be traced to errors, such as over-eating, or eating wrong foods, and therefore, called for self-restraint on the part of the sufferer. This meant education of the villagers in hygiene and in sanitation. The true function of such an ashram was to show to the people how they could avoid disease altogether. This could not be done by dispensing medicines. The people would not perhaps take too kindly to such propaganda. But he had no doubt that that was the line the workers ought to pursue.

Now on he gave more and more attention to teaching hygiene to the villagers. The contact with the people, and more specially with Harijans, grew closer. At the end of the morning's march, a batch of men and women from his party visited the Harijan quarters of the village near the camp, taking with them brooms and spades. They talked to Harijans about the necessity of sanitation, about keeping their yards and their roads clean, about burying the rubbish, instead of leaving it to blow here and there, and about the virtue of digging a little hole, when going to the jungle for the calls of nature, and covering it up with earth afterwards, instead of soiling the surroundings and leaving everything exposed for flies to carry the infection. While engaged in these talks, the party began cleaning the *basti* itself. This drew out the Harijans, who appreciated the idea and soon joined in the work themselves. The water supply and general conditions were then investigated and a report was submitted to Gandhi on return to the camp.

The march continued and the Harijans began to appreciate the tour more and more. They not only met Gandhi and his party but very often they led them with a playing and dancing band. Now rains began to pour in. He continued the march in the hope of completing the tour. But, at Todang, on June 4, the downpour began in the early

morning. The village road was particularly bad and there was risk of getting stranded. The next day, the sky cleared; the party began a forced march of eleven and a half miles, reaching Bhadrak in three hours and thirty-five minutes.

In Bhadrak, Gandhi gave most of his time to the Harijan workers. Being a sub-divisional town, it had much worse Harijan dwellings than the villages. It was the last place in the walking tour, and the party stayed there three days. On his arrival, one of the members of the party went to Gandhi and asked if he might conveniently go to Calcutta for a few days as the tour was over. "What is this?" said Gandhi. "Did you not see the filthy lanes as we walked through them this morning? There is plenty of work to keep us busy all the time we are here. Don't imagine the pilgrimage has ended until we get into the train for Wardha."

The walking tour of Orissa ended on June 8.

Tour Ends

1934

On June 6, 1934, two months after Gandhi's decision to suspend the civil resistance movement, the Government of India lifted the ban on the Congress but not on many of its subsidiary bodies. Special laws still continued to be in force and many Congressmen including Sardar Patel, the president, Jawaharlal Nehru, the general secretary and, Abdul Ghaffar Khan were benind the bars. After the lapse of thirty months, the Congress Working Committee met for the first time at Wardha, on the 12th and the 13th of June, and at Bombay on the 17th and the 18th. Among those who took prominent part in the discussions were Gandhi, Azad, Aney and Mrs. Naidu. Malaviya and Rajagopalachari attended the meeting by special invitation.

The committee laid down a constructive programme and decided to draw the attention of the Government to the discrepancy in their communique which, while withdrawing the ban on Congress organizations, had retained the ban on the Red Shirts and several others. The committee by another resolution clarified its position regarding the white paper:

"The white paper in no way expresses the will of the people of India, has been more or less condemned by almost all the political parties, and falls far short of the Congress goal, if it does not retard the progress towards it. The only satisfactory alternative to the white paper is a constitution drawn up by the constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage or as near it as possible, with the power, if necessary, to the important minorities to have their representatives elected exclusively by the electors belonging to such minorities.

"The white paper lapsing, the Communal Award must lapse automatically. Among many other things, it will be the bounden duty of the constituent assembly to determine the method of representation of important minorities and make provision for otherwise safeguarding their interests.

"Since, however, the different communities are sharply divided on the question of the Communal Award, it is necessary to define the Congress attitude on it. The Congress claims to represent equally all the communities composing the Indian nation and, therefore, in view of the division of opinion, can neither accept nor reject the Communal Award as long as the division of opinion lasts. At the same time, it is necessary to re-declare the policy of the Congress on the communal question.

"No solution that is not purely national can be propounded by the Congress. But the Congress is pledged to accept any solution, falling short of the national, which is agreed to by all the parties concerned, and, conversely, to reject any solution which is not agreed to by any of the said parties.

"Judged by the national standard, the Communal Award is absolutely unsatisfactory, and besides being open to serious objections on other grounds. It is, however, obvious that the only way to prevent the untoward consequences of the Communal Award is to explore ways and means of arriving at an agreed solution and not by any appeal on this essentially domestic question to the British Government or any other outside authority."

Taking into consideration the social upheaval in the country, the committee clarified its position: "Whilst the Working Committee welcomes the formation of groups representing the different schools of thought, it is necessary, in view of loose talk about the confiscation of private property and necessity of class war, to remind the Congressmen that the Karachi resolution as finally settled by the A.-I.C.C. at Bombay in August 1931, which always lays down certain principles, neither contemplates confiscation, nor the advocacy of class war. The Working Committee is further of opinion that confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence. At the same time the Working Committee is of opinion that the Congress does contemplate wiser and juster use of private property so as to prevent the exploitation of the landless poor, and also contemplates a healthier relationship between capital and labour."

In Bombay, outside the committee meetings, Gandhi gave all his attention to Harijan service. Besides addressing a number of public meetings he went round the Harijan quarters all over the city and discussed with Dr. Ambedkar and many others as how to tackle the canker of untouchability. In a farewell speech, he stated: "Bombay

is beautiful indeed but wherein does its beauty consist—in Malabar Hill or in the *kachrapati* at Mahalaxmi? I beseech you to have a look at the plague-spots in Bombay and to move the municipality to deal with them at once. How would you like to live near a sewer even for a single day?"

On June 19, Gandhi arrived in Poona. On June 25, a bomb was thrown on what the assailant believed was the car carrying Gandhi on his way to the municipal building to receive an address. Seven persons, including the chief officer of the municipality and two constables who were in the car, were injured. Gandhi, who was following in another car narrowly escaped. In a statement, he said that the unfortunate incident had undoubtedly advanced the Harijan cause: "I cannot believe that any sane sanatanist could ever encourage the insane act that was perpetrated this evening. However, I would like the sanatanist friends to control the language that is being used by the speakers and writers claiming to speak on their behalf. The sorrowful incident has undoubtedly advanced the Harijan cause. It is easy to see causes prosper by martyrdom of those who stand for them. I am not aching for martyrdom, but if it comes my way in the prosecution of what I consider to be the supreme duty in defence of the faith I hold in common with millions of Hindus, I shall have well earned it and it will be possible for the historian of the future to say that the vow that I had taken before the Harijans that I would, if need be, die in the attempt to remove untouchability was literally fulfilled. Let those, who grudge me what yet remains to me of this earthly existence, know that it is the easiest thing to do away with my body. Why then put in jeopardy many innocent lives in order to take mine which they held to be sinful? What would the world have said, if the bomb had dropped on me and my party, which included my wife and three girls, who are as dear to me as daughters and are entrusted to me by their parents? I am sure that no harm to them could have been intended by the bomb-thrower. I have nothing but deep pity for the unknown thrower of the bomb. If I had my way, and if the bomb-thrower was known, I should certainly ask for his discharge even as I did in South Africa, in the case of those who successfully assaulted me. Let the reformers not be incensed against the bomb-thrower or those who may be behind him. What I should like them to do is to redouble their efforts to rid the country of the deadly evil of untouchability."

From Poona Gandhi went to Ahmedabad and then to Ajmer and Bhavnagar. Everywhere the sanatanists staged black-flag demonstrations. On July 5, Pandit Lalnath, leader of the sanatanists, appeared on the scene at Ajmer and tried to address a meeting condemning the Harijan movement, with the result that he received a lathi blow on the head. Gandhi, on his arrival at the meeting place, rebuked the audience and then called upon Pandit Lalnath to speak. In a statement issued to the press that day Gandhi declared his intention to fast:

"I have now decided to impose upon myself a fast of seven days, to commence on Tuesday, noon, August 7th, that is, two days after reaching Wardha, which I expect to do on August 5th next. This is the least penance I owe to Pandit Lalnath and those sanatanists whom he represents. God willing, the Harijan tour will finish on the 2nd of August next. It is, perhaps, fitting that the end will be signalized by a penitential fast. May it cover all errors, conscious or unconscious, of omission or commission, of me and my co-workers. The movement will not end with the fast. Let it open a new and a cleaner chapter in this struggle for the emancipation of nearly fifty million human beings from thraldom imposed in the sacred name of religion. Let it also be a warning to those who are in, or will join, the movement that they must approach it with clean hand and hearts, free from untruth and violence in thought, work and deed."

After Ajmer he went to Karachi, Lahore, Calcutta, Cawnpore, and Lucknow and the nine months' Harijan tour closed at Benares on July 29. All over the country, the day was observed as a day of thanksgiving for the successful termination of the tour. In Benares, on that day, just as he was about to leave for the public meeting, he received a warrant on behalf of the Lord of Kashi, calling upon him to appear before the *kotwal* of the Lord and there to be tried for breach of Sanatana Dharma. This was the last of Pandit Lalnath's demonstrations. "Who gave you the warrant?" asked Gandhi of the young sanatanist who served the warrant. "The Lord prompted me to serve the warrant and arrest you," replied the youth. "Then, why does not the Lord prompt me to obey this warrant?" asked Gandhi. "Because you are a sinner against Sanatana Dharma," promptly replied the youth. Now Pandit Lalnath himself appeared on the scene, and asked for two portraits of Gandhi. Gandhi said he never kept any portraits himself and, in any case, he would not comply with

any of the requests made by the party. The sanatanists procured Gandhi's portrait, and publicly burnt it.

The wide circulation of leaflets, vowing vengeance against Gandhi and containing inflammatory language, had made the members of the reception committee, as also the police, nervous about Gandhi's safety. There was, however, no incident at the crowded public meeting. Among the addresses was one signed by many learned pundits. Another feature of the gathering was the authoritative representation of the sanatanists on the platform. Pandit Devanayakacharya was to attend the meeting for presenting their point of view before Gandhi's speech. He, however, came half an hour late, in the middle of Gandhi's speech. But seeing the pundit come up to the platform, Gandhi interrupted his speech and called upon Pandit Devanayakacharya to address the audience. The burden of his speech was that Gandhi was introducing an innovation and undermining the ancient tradition under the name of Sanatana Dharma. The chief complaint however, was against Gandhi's identifying himself with the Temple Entry Bill. He was followed by Malaviya, who spoke in support of equal, civil and religious rights to the Harijans, all the time quoting relevant scriptures. He, however, sympathized with the objections of the sanatanists against temple entry legislation, though not the entry of the Harijans into temples. He said that the aid of the legislature should not be invoked for effecting the reform. Gandhi followed and complimented Pandit Devanayakacharya on his restraint and said that he was never averse to being present at any meeting of rival pundits. But he could not possibly, in a matter of conscience, abide by the decision of the umpire, if it failed to appeal to his heart and his reason. He could not be expected to give up a lifelong belief and practice, because somebody else, however learned he might be, gave an interpretation of the shastras which was different from his own. Surely it should be enough to satisfy any sanatanist that he himself avowed his belief in the same shastras as the sanatanists. So far as the Temple Entry Bill was concerned, he believed in its necessity for the reasons he had often publicly stated, but the sanatanists need not be perturbed, as he had no desire to prosecute the movement in favour of the bill, if the majority of the Hindu legislators did not want it.

On August 2, the last day of the tour, he visited many Harijan quarters and also paid a visit to Kabir Math. The last function of the

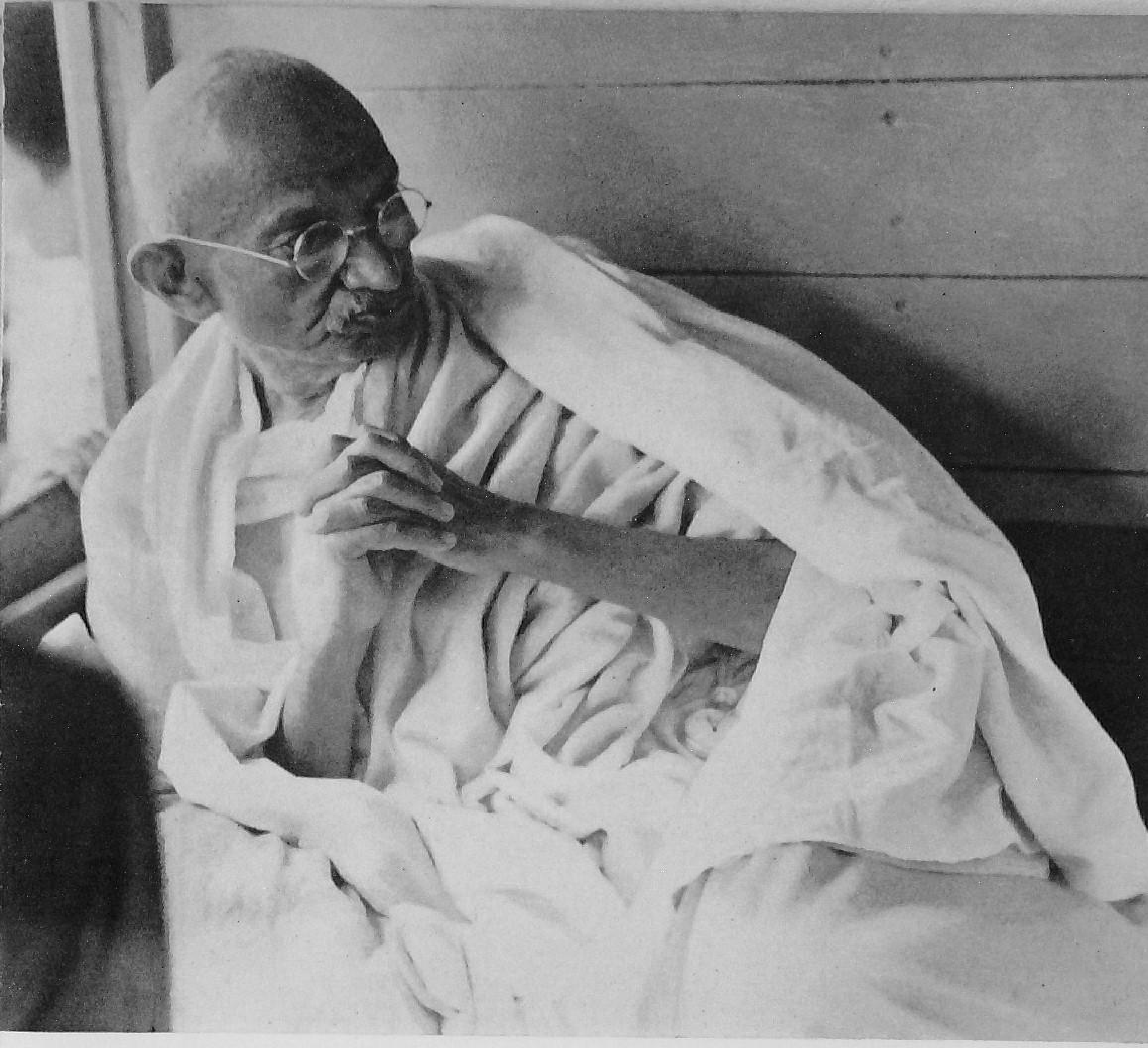
day and the Harijan tour was a women's meeting at which Gandhi spoke at length:

"It is a tragedy that religion for us means today nothing more than restrictions on food and drink, nothing more than adherence to a sense of superiority and inferiority. Let me tell you that there cannot be any grosser ignorance than this. Birth and observance of forms cannot determine one's superiority and inferiority. Character is the only determining factor. God did not create men with the badge of superiority or inferiority; no scripture which labels a human being as inferior or untouchable because of his or her birth can command our allegiance, it is a denial of God and Truth which is God. God, who is the embodiment of Truth and Right and Justice, can never have sanctioned a religion or practice which regards one fifth of our vast population as untouchables. I want you, therefore, to rid yourselves of this monstrous notion. Untouchability attaching to unclean work is there, but the moment we have washed ourselves clean of the dirt or filth, we cease to be untouchables. But no work or conduct can render a man or woman untouchable for all time. Sinners we are all to a greater or less extent, and everyone of our spiritual books—the Gita, Bhagavat, and Tulsi Ramayana—declares in no uncertain terms that whoever seeks refuge in Him, whoever takes His name, shall be free from sin. That covenant is for all mankind. There is another simple test that I want you to apply to this question. Every species, human and sub-human, has some distinguishing mark, so that you can tell a man from a beast, or a god from a cow and so on. Have the so-called untouchables any distinguishing mark declaring them to be untouchables? They are as much human as everyone of us, and we do not regard even sub-human beings as bearing the mark of untouchability. Why and whence, then, this monstrous injustice? It is not religion, but the grossest species of irreligion. I want you to cast off that sin, if you still happen to have it on you. And the only way in which we can expiate this sin of centuries is to befriend the Harijans, by going to their quarters, by hugging their children as you do your own, by interesting yourselves in their welfare, by finding out whether they get enough to eat, whether they get pure water to drink, whether they have the fresh light and air that you enjoy as of right. The other way is for each of you to start the spinning sacrifice and to pledge yourselves to wear khadi, which supports millions of these submerged human beings. The spinning

sacrifice will help you in some slight measure to identify yourselves with them, and every yard of khadi that you wear will mean some coppers going into the pockets of the Harijans and the poor. The last thing is to contribute your mite to the Harijan Fund, which has no other end but the amelioration of the lot of the Harijans."

During the nine months of the Harijan tour, Gandhi covered over 12,500 miles and collected eight lakhs of rupees. He summarized his impressions of the tour in a press interview:

"The impression left on my mind is that untouchability is on its last legs. Millions who attended the meetings were not all utterly ignorant of all I had to say to them. They were certainly not indifferent. The intensive propaganda carried on by sanatanists had left no room for ignorance or indifference. Nothing was left undone to prejudice the mass mind against this movement. The grossest falsehoods were broadcast. It would be wrong, therefore, to say that the attendance of the multitudes at the meetings was purely a personal compliment to me and had no reference to my message. I am quite sure that the message has appealed to the reason of the masses. I am also fully aware that all of them are not yet ready to translate their beliefs into practice. But I consider it to be a tremendous gain that the masses have begun to believe in the truth of the message. It makes the task of the workers easier than before. To show how heartily the masses have taken part in the movement, I should mention that the eight lakhs of rupees collected during the past nine months represent contributions from the poorest. People are not known to contribute for causes which they utterly dislike. The third thing I should like to say about the tour is that a demonstrable awakening on a large scale has taken place among the Harijans. Many of them have made unsolicited statements before me that the position had considerably advanced and that they had confidence that untouchability would be a thing of the past in the near future. I share their confidence. If the movement goes on as it is doing at present—and I have no doubt that it will go on—it must cause daily increasing awakening among the Harijans, and when they fully realize how they can substantially help themselves, how, in many cases, the law is with them, whether *savarna* Hindus like it or not, the Harijans would make good their position. I would, of course, hope that *savarna* Hindus will realize the wickedness of untouchability as it is practised today and get rid of it themselves, rather than that they should be compelled to do so by



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi, during the train journey, July 1934

Amraoti, November 16, 1933.

I have your letter with the very beautiful card which you want me to keep in my copy of the Bhagvad Gita. I am not going to carry out your wish literally, for, that will defeat it. I do not read from the Gita every day. I listen its reading in the morning. And since your idea, I take it, is that there should have the picture daily as a book mark I propose to keep it in the book which I may be reading for the time being and transfer it from book to book.

I see that you are having Gujarati lessons, probably from Manu, for, you have addressed your name in Gujarati.

I am glad that you are coming in close touch with Manu and Elizabeth. You ask me what I wish about this love affair. I regard both as very lovable, very sincere and very earnest, but what I fear is that they do not measure the full consequences of the proposed marriage. I can thoroughly appreciate their view point. For them it is enough that they love each other. But I have always held that whilst young people should first make their choice its finality should be dependent upon the approval and blessings of the elders. I have seen young love so often disappointed in after years. However deliberate the choice ~~may be~~, somehow or other later years proved the choice to have been ill-made. In this case I see grave danger ahead. The most fatal objection, however, that I can see to this proposed match is that Elizabeth has sworn, and from her own standpoint perhaps naturally so, that the progeny should be brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. I do not mind it at all. But, even though Manu may have no objection, his parents and his people whom he loves dearly will never be able to reconcile themselves to their grandchildren being brought up in a faith other than their own.

Then there is the question of the whole Hindu culture. I see, even at the present moment, a conflict going on between Hindu culture and the Christianity of Indians; The latter are being torn between two almost opposite attractions. Somehow or other, Christianity has become synonymous with Western culture. Perhaps rightly so, for, the religion of the Western people is predominently Christianity and therefore, Western culture may be fittingly described as Christian culture as Indian culture would certainly be described as Hindu culture. The progeny of Elizabeth must be brought up in exclusively different surroundings unless Manu decides to tear himself away from his own surroundings and lives an exclusive life or decides to settle down in the West. I think that, spiritually considered, Elizabeth herself should not be a party to the possibility of Manu having to tear himself away.

Then there is the question of Elizabeth herself. She would be hard put to it to accommodate herself to Indian surroundings. Her constitution may be undermined or she would have to live a life out of all correspondence to her surroundings. There is ample justification for Europeans saying that they cannot possibly exist in India without incurring expenses out of all proportion to the Indian average. It is difficult enough even for Mira, in spite of her tremendous love for India, in spite of her iron will, to bend herself to the Indian simplicity, and Mira is ~~an exception to~~ the general rule. But even she has to be protected against herself and compel to give herself facilities which her associates are not given. She would have become bed-ridden long ago if I had not laid down the law from the very first and I know that she has extraordinarily accommodated herself to the Indian life. But, even she would have failed completely if she had married an Indian and made the futile attempt of bringing up her children after the Indian style. Nobody who has not lived in India like Indians can possibly have a conception of what I am writing. India is the poorest country in the world. And it is a tremendous job

-3-

for a Western girl to come to India and marry an Indian with a fixed determination of living the essentially Indian life. I do not recall a single Indian who has taken a European girl for his wife living the life of the average Indian. He simply cannot do it if he will do justice to his wife. And I myself much less ~~experienced to~~ reconcile ourselves to Nanu having lower his idea for the sake of Elizabeth. It is for reasons such as this that I have cried out for celibacy for those who dedicate themselves completely to God, i.e., to the service of God's creation. There is no difficulty in my treating Mira as my daughter or you, but, imagine me having any European girl as daughter-in-law. I should be frightened. I could not shoulder the burden, because I could not reconcile myself to Devadas, for instance, having to tare himself away from his natural surroundings. It is ~~for these reasons that~~ I feel it to be premature for Indians to contract marriage relations with Europeans. When India has improved her conditions or when Europeans have ~~used their~~ boys and girls who have become enured to uttermost simplicity and have become domiciled in India I can look forward with happiness to Indo-European marriages.

Now, I think, I have given you a long enough letter and ample matter for thought. You know, at least somewhat, what I would wish, but I do not, in any shapre or form, expect you to give effect to my wish, if what I have said does not appeal to you. And, if you think otherwise about the future of Nanu and Elizabeth, you will not hesitate to tell me so. Whilst I deeply appreciate your losing yourself in me I would not be guilty of enslaving your reason or your heart. Imperfect as I am, I would not have you to become a partner in my errors. You must, therefore, exercise your full judgment in everything you do in association with me. My love for you will be none the less for your differing with me when you feel the need for difference in thought, speech or action.

-4-

I have not put before you one more thing that I have stated in my letter to Elizabeth. I would simply state the proposition without arguing it.

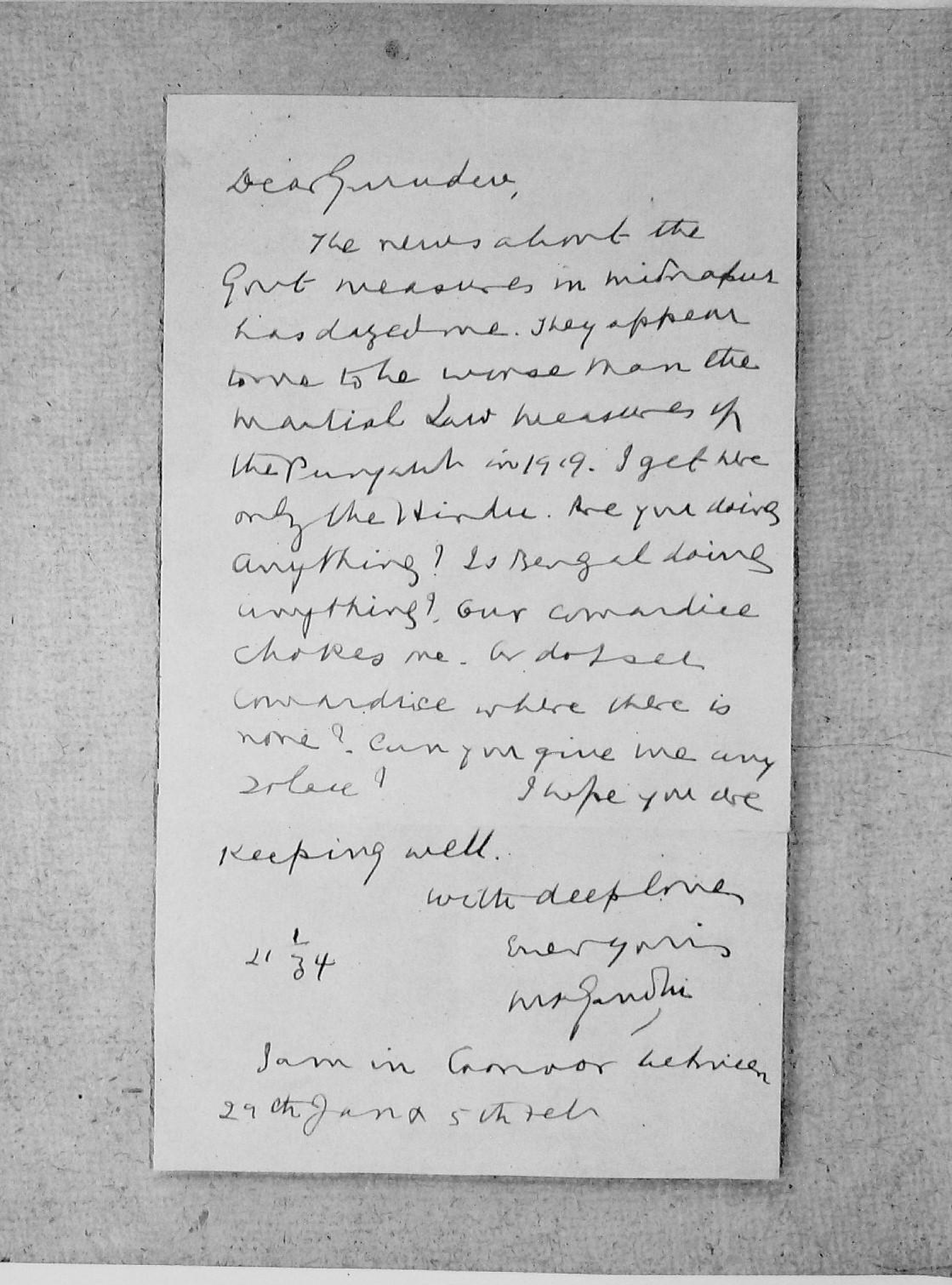
I believe that when ~~the~~ husband and wife profess a different faith, the progeny should be brought up in the faith of the husband. There are, to me, sound religious and philosophic reasons for this proposition. If this proposition does not appear to be sound, you should ask Elizabeth to show you my letter to her.

I am working just now under tremendous strain. I get very little time for carrying on correspondence. This letter too, I am dictating under trying circumstances. I would, therefore, like you, if you think it wise to share this letter with Elizabeth as also Nanu. But, if you think it wise not do so, please tell both of them that I have their joint letter as also Elizabeth's previous letter, both of which I appreciate and about which I have written to you.

I hope you received my letter wherein the £.15/- sent by you were acknowledged. I cannot warn you too often against unduly denying yourself.

Princess Efy Aristarchi,
Hotel Schotzky,
Freiburg 1-B.
(Germany)

Gandhi's letter to Princess Efy Aristarchi, dated Amraoti, November 16, 1933


Dear Gurudev,

The news about the Govt measures in Midnapur has dazed me. They appear to me to be worse than the Martial Law measures of the Punjab in 1919. I get here only the Hindu. Are you doing anything? Is Bengal doing anything? Our cowardice chokes me. Or do I see cowardice where there is none? Can you give me any solace? I hope you are keeping well.

With deep love

Ever yours

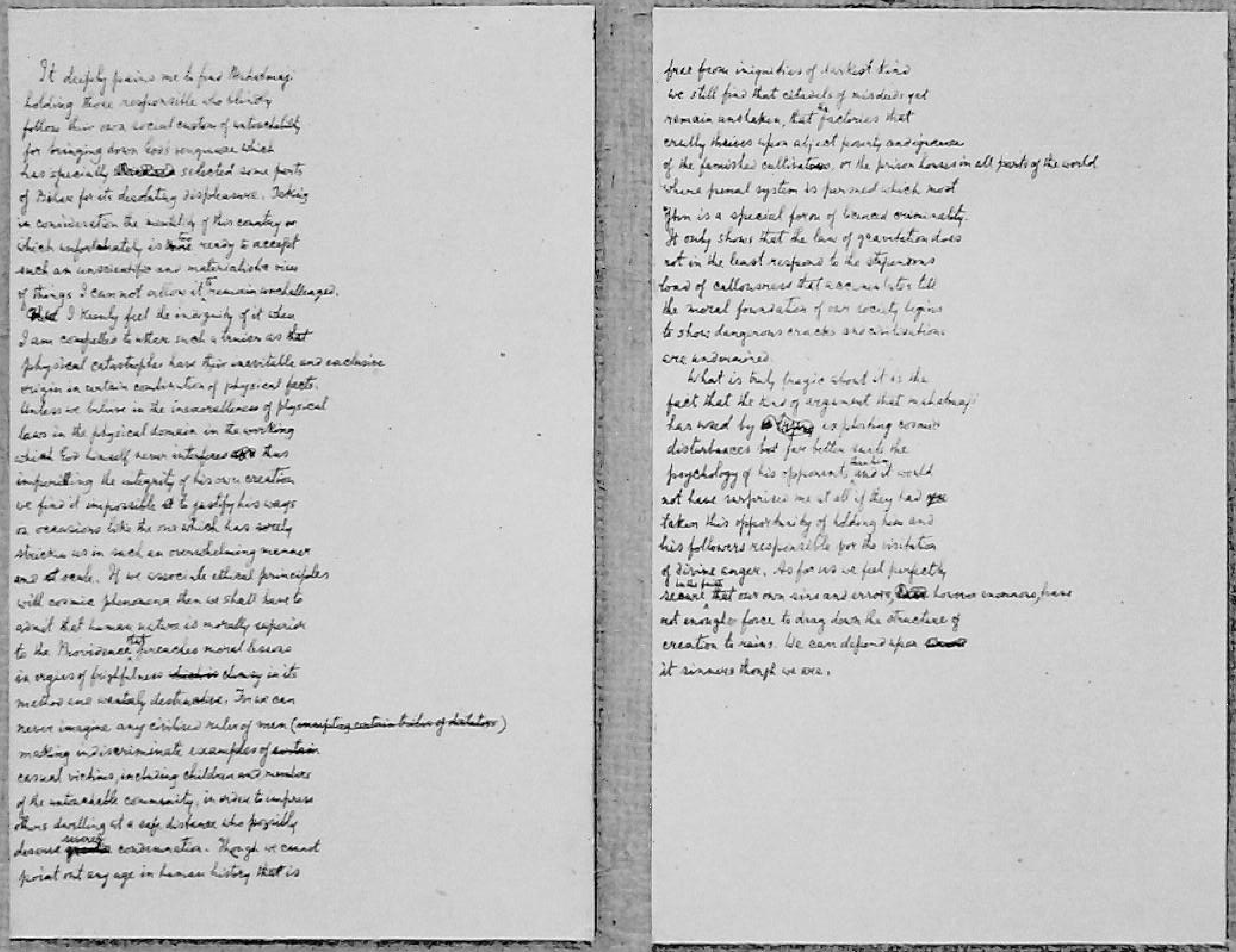
M K Gandhi

21-1-34

I am in Coonoor between 29th Jan & 5th Feb

Courtesy : Visva - Bharati

Gandhi's letter to Tagore, dated January 21, 1934



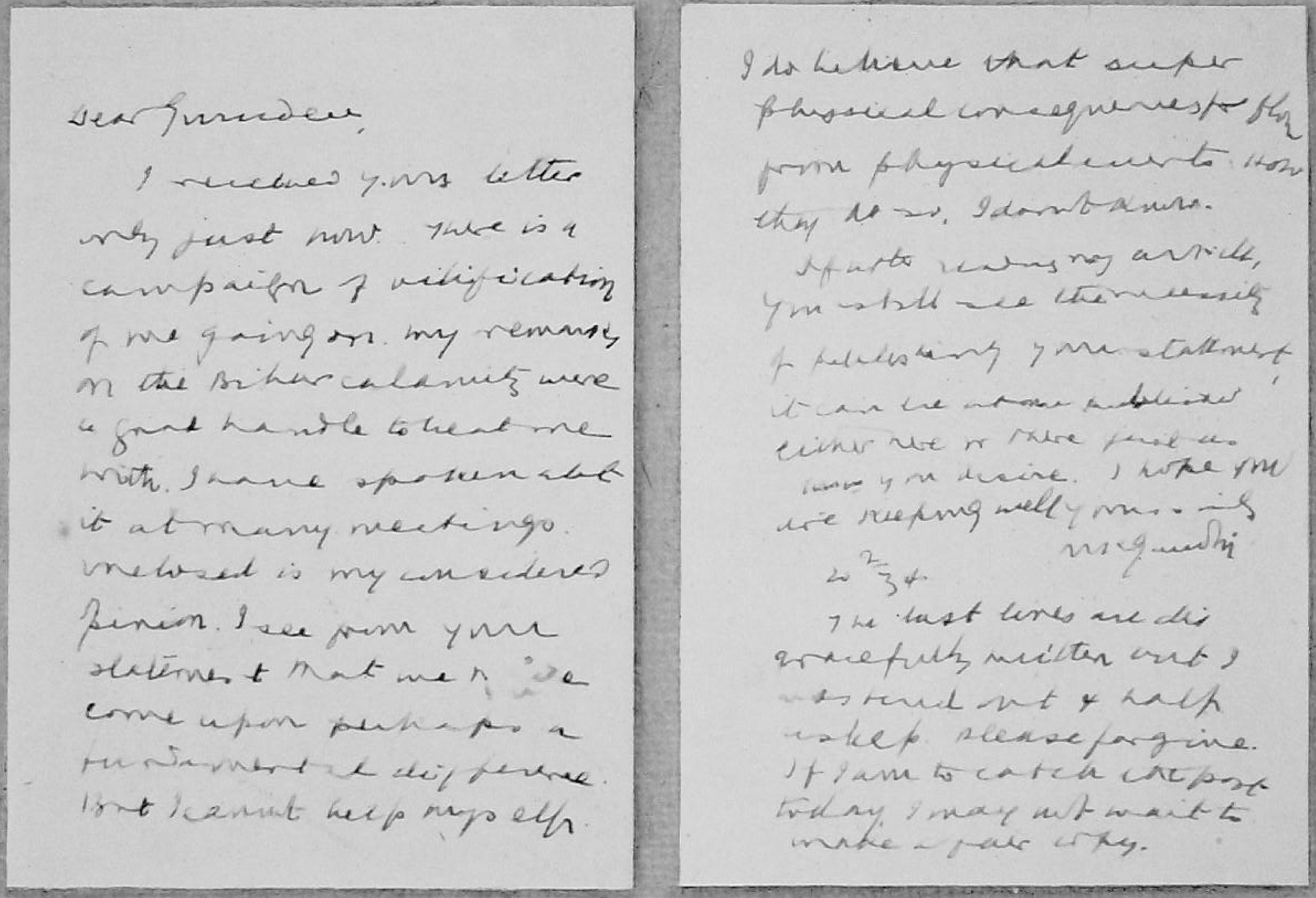
It deeply pains me to find Mahatmaji holding those responsible who blindly follow their own social custom of untouchability for bringing down God's vengeance which has specially [illegible] selected some parts of Bihar for its devastating displeasure. Taking in consideration the mentality of this country which unfortunately is more ready to accept such an unscientific and materialistic view of things I can not allow it to remain unchallenged. [illegible] I keenly feel the incongruity of it when I am compelled to utter such a truism as that physical catastrophes have their inevitable and exclusive origin in certain combination of physical facts. Unless we believe in the inexorableness of physical laws in the physical domain in the working which God himself never interferes [illegible] thus imperilling the integrity of his own creation we find it impossible [illegible] to justify his ways on occasions like the one which has sorely stricken us in such an overwhelming manner and [illegible] scale. If we associate ethical principles with cosmic phenomena then we shall have to admit that human nature is morally superior to the Providence that preaches moral lessons in orgies of frightfulness [illegible] clumsy in its method and wantonly destructive. For we can never imagine any civilised ruler of men (excepting certain tribes of dictators) making indiscriminate examples of [illegible] casual victims, including children and members of the untouchable community, in order to impress others dwelling at a safe distance who possibly deserve severer condemnation. Though we cannot point out any age in human history that is

free from iniquities of darkest kind we still find that citadels of misdeeds yet remain unshaken, that the factories that cruelly thrive upon abject poverty and ignorance of the famished cultivators, or the prison houses in all parts of the world where penal system is pursued which most often is a special form of licensed criminality. It only shows that the law of gravitation does not in the least respond to the stupendous load of callousness that accumulates till the moral foundation of our society begins to show dangerous cracks and civilisations are undermined.

What is truly tragic about it is the fact that the kind of argument that Mahatmaji has used by [illegible] exploiting cosmic disturbances best far better suits the psychology of his opponents, thinking and it would not have surprised me at all if they had [illegible] taken this opportunity of holding him and his followers responsible for the visitation of divine anger. As for us we feel perfectly secure in the faith that our own sins and errors, [illegible] however enormous, have not enough force to drag down the structure of creation to ruins. We can depend upon [illegible] it sinners though we are.

Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Draft of Tagore's historic statement criticizing Gandhi's views on "Bihar earthquake and untouchability," dated February 4, 1934



Dear Gurudev,

I received your letter only just now. There is a campaign of vilification of me going on. My remarks on the Bihar calamity were a good handle to beat me with. I have spoken about it at many meetings. Enclosed is my considered opinion. I see from your statement that we have come upon perhaps a fundamental difference. But I cannot help myself.

I do believe that super-physical consequences flow from physical events. How they do so, I do not know.

If after reading my article, you still see the necessity of publishing your statement it can be at once published either here or there just as soon as you desire. I hope you are keeping well. Yours sincerely,

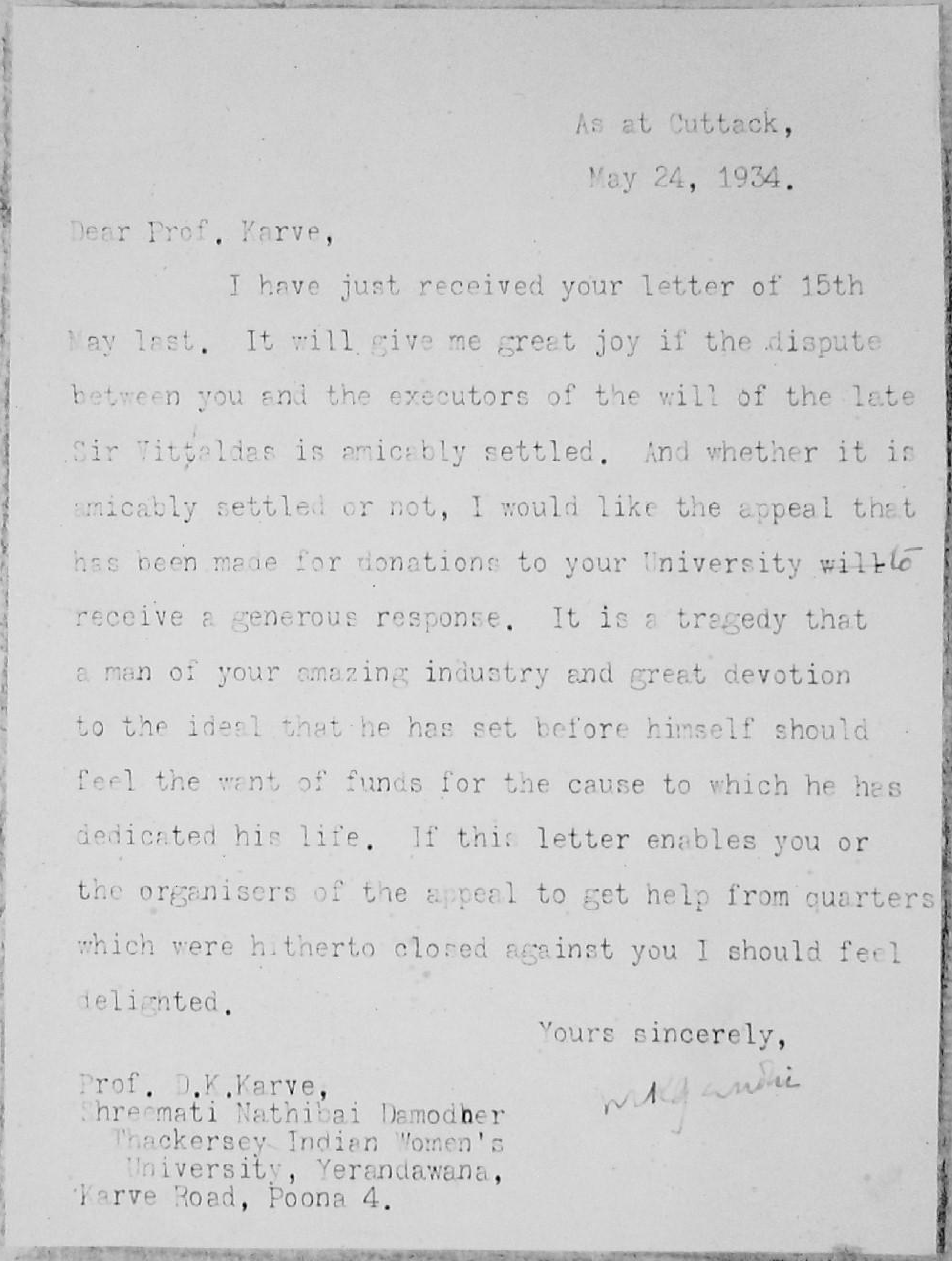
M. K. Gandhi

20-2-34

The last lines are disgracefully written but I was tired out & half asleep. Please forgive. If I am to catch the post today I may not wait to make a fair copy.

Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's letter to Tagore, dated February 20, 1934, re-affirming his views on Bihar earthquake



As at Cuttack,

May 24, 1934.

Dear Prof. Karve,

I have just received your letter of 15th May last. It will give me great joy if the dispute between you and the executors of the will of the late Sir Vittaldas is amicably settled. And whether it is amicably settled or not, I would like the appeal that has been made for donations to your University ~~will~~ to receive a generous response. It is a tragedy that a man of your amazing industry and great devotion to the ideal that he has set before himself should feel the want of funds for the cause to which he has dedicated his life. If this letter enables you or the organisers of the appeal to get help from quarters which were hitherto closed against you I should feel delighted.

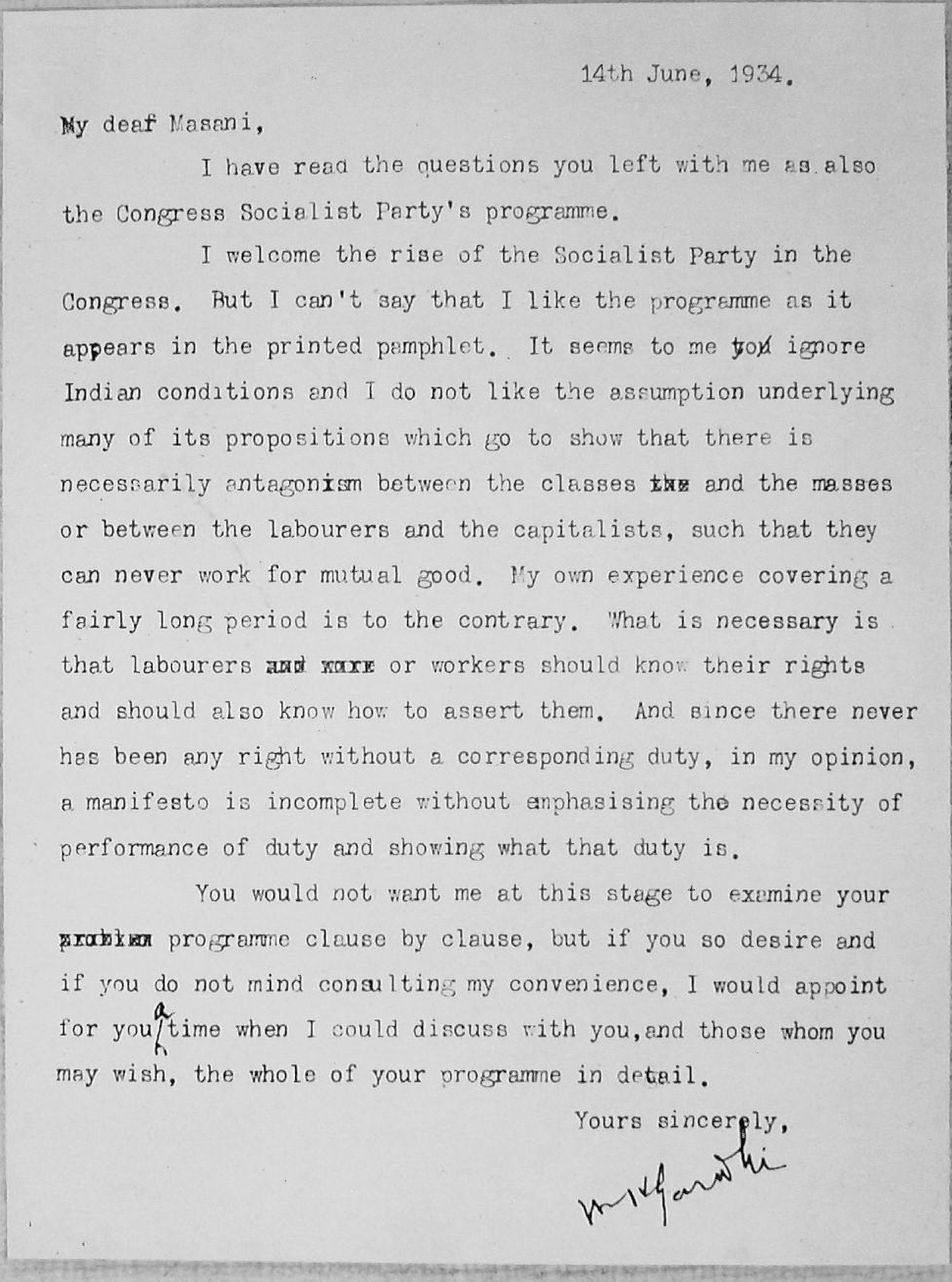
Yours sincerely,

M K Gandhi

Prof. D.K.Karve,
Shreemati Nathibai Damodher
Thackersey Indian Women's
University, Yerandawana,
Karve Road, Poona 4.

Courtesy: S. N. D. T. University

Gandhi's letter to D. K. Karve, dated May 24, 1934



14th June, 1934.

My deaf Masani,

I have read the questions you left with me as also the Congress Socialist Party's programme.

I welcome the rise of the Socialist Party in the Congress. But I can't say that I like the programme as it appears in the printed pamphlet. It seems to me you ignore Indian conditions and I do not like the assumption underlying many of its propositions which go to show that there is necessarily antagonism between the classes ~~the~~ and the masses or between the labourers and the capitalists, such that they can never work for mutual good. My own experience covering a fairly long period is to the contrary. What is necessary is that labourers ~~and work~~ or workers should know their rights and should also know how to assert them. And since there never has been any right without a corresponding duty, in my opinion, a manifesto is incomplete without emphasising the necessity of performance of duty and showing what that duty is.

You would not want me at this stage to examine your ~~problem~~ programme clause by clause, but if you so desire and if you do not mind consulting my convenience, I would appoint for you a time when I could discuss with you, and those whom you may wish, the whole of your programme in detail.

Yours sincerely,

Courtesy: M. R. Masani

Gandhi's letter to M. R. Masani on the socialist programme, dated June 14, 1934

Chugai Nippo Sha

Kyoto, Japan

June 14 1934

Mr. M. K. Gandhi

Central Relief Committee,

Patna, India

Revered Sir:-

I am very grateful to you for your kind message. It was published in my paper and was greatly admired by the people here.

I take this opportunity to bring to your notice that people in Japan are full of admiration for your great service to humanity at large. Not only the Indian people but we in the East are all proud of you. We are in a position to prove to the world at large that even today, when the whole world is under the grip of materialism, East, true to its tradition, is capable of sending its message of peace to the suffering humanity.

I earnestly and sincerely pray for the complete success of your great mission and peace, happiness, and prosperity of your people.

I thank you again, and remain,

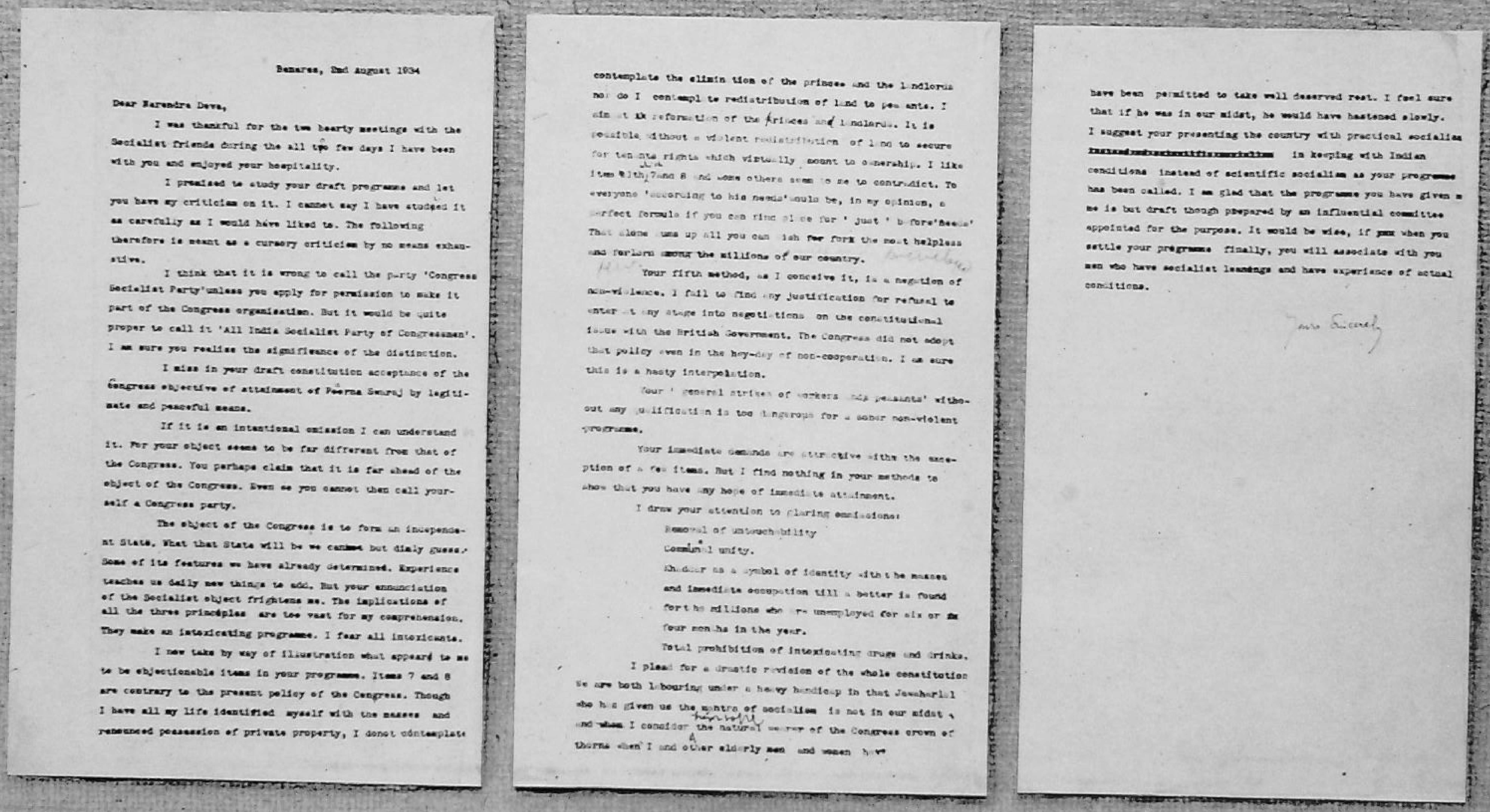
Yours very thankfully,

Ruikotsu Matani

A letter of appreciation from Japan, dated June 14, 1934

Photograph : Bourne & Shepherd

Gandhi replying to the civic address, July 21, 1934, Town Hall, Calcutta



Benares, 2nd August 1934

Dear Narendra Deva,

I was thankful for the two hearty meetings with the Socialist friends during the all too few days I have been with you and enjoyed your hospitality.

I promised to study your draft programme and let you have my criticism on it. I cannot say I have studied it as carefully as I would have liked to. The following therefore is meant as a cursory criticism by no means exhaustive.

I think that it is wrong to call the party 'Congress Socialist Party' unless you apply for permission to make it part of the Congress organisation. But it would be quite proper to call it 'All India Socialist Party of Congressmen'. I am sure you realise the significance of the distinction.

I miss in your draft constitution acceptance of the Congress objective of attainment of Poorna Swaraj by legitimate and peaceful means.

If it is an intentional omission I can understand it. For your object seems to be far different from that of the Congress. You perhaps claim that it is far ahead of the object of the Congress. Even so you cannot then call yourself a Congress party.

The object of the Congress is to form an independent State. What that State will be we cannot but dimly guess. Some of its features we have already determined. Experience teaches us daily new things to add. But your annunciation of the Socialist object frightens me. The implications of all the three principles are too vast for my comprehension. They make an intoxicating programme. I fear all intoxicants.

I now take by way of illustration what appear to me to be objectionable items in your programme. Items 7 and 8 are contrary to the present policy of the Congress. Though I have all my life identified myself with the masses and renounced possession of private property, I donot contemplate the elimin tion of the princes and the landlords nor do I contempl te redistribution of land to pea ants. I aim at reformation of the princes and landlords. It is possible without a violent redistribution of land to secure for tenants rights which virtually amount to ownership. I like item 9 with 7 and 8 and some others seem to me to contradict. To everyone 'according to his needs' would be, in my opinion, a perfect formula if you can find place for 'just' before 'needs' That alone sums up all you can wish for the most helpless and forlorn among the millions of our country.

Your fifth method, as I conceive it, is a negation of non-violence. I fail to find any justification for refusal to enter at any stage into negotiations on the constitutional issue with the British Government. The Congress did not adopt that policy even in the hey-day of non-cooperation. I am sure this is a hasty interpolation.

Your 'general strikes of workers and peasants' without any qualification is too dangerous for a sober non-violent programme.

Your immediate demands are attractive with the exception of a few items. But I find nothing in your methods to show that you have any hope of immediate attainment.

I draw your attention to glaring omissions:

Removal of untouchability

Communal unity.

Khaddar as a symbol of identity with the masses and immediate occupation till a better is found for the millions who are unemployed for six or four months in the year.

Total prohibition of intoxicating drugs and drinks.

I plead for a drastic revision of the whole constitution We are both labouring under a heavy handicap in that Jawaharlal who has given us the mantra of socialism is not in our midst, and when I consider the natural wearer of the Congress crown of thorns when I and other elderly men and women have been permitted to take well deserved rest. I feel sure that if he was in our midst, he would have hastened slowly. I suggest your presenting the country with practical socialism in keeping with Indian conditions instead of scientific socialism as your programme has been called. I am glad that the programme you have given me is but draft though prepared by an influential committee appointed for the purpose. It would be wise, if when you settle your programme finally, you will associate with you men who have socialist leanings and have experience of actual conditions.

Yours sincerely

Courtesy : Narendra Deva

Gandhi's letter to Narendra Deva on the formation and programme of Congress Socialist Party, dated Benares, August 2, 1934

Courtesy : N. Jasani

Gandhi at work, 1934

circumstances beyond their control. Whatever happens, untouchability cannot survive many years."

During his stay at Benares, the Working Committee presided over by Sardar Patel met to iron out differences between Malaviya and Aney on one side, and the rest of the members on the other. Short of abandoning its fundamental attitude of non-acceptance and non-rejection of the Communal Award, the committee explored all avenues for discovering a *via media* with a view to retain co-operation of Malaviya and Aney. The attempts failed and they both resigned from the Congress Parliamentary Board, with the object of carrying on agitation against the Communal Award and the white paper, in the legislatures and outside, and of setting up candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly for the promotion of that object.

Gandhi reached Wardha on August 5. On the next day he issued a statement on the fast: "As I enter upon the seven days' fast from tomorrow, I would like to re-emphasize the necessity on the part of Harijan workers helping the cause by greater personal purification and greater concentration on the work before them. The monster of untouchability will not be killed without constant and ceaseless effort on the part of workers who have faith in the mission and who have by patient toil built up personal purity and integrity. I would like to utter a word of warning to the Congressmen and the Congress workers. During the coming seven days I shall be filled with thoughts about them as I have been during the past month. The acrimony with which Congress elections have been fought in some places and the unclean methods used and adopted by the Congress workers by manipulating votes and grossly abusing the rule about the habitual wearing of khadi have filled me with horror and dismay. The constitution provides for truthful and non-violent methods. In some provinces, at some elections, truth and non-violence have been conspicuous by their absence. Although my fast has nothing to do with these unclean methods, how I wish Congress workers will detect my anguish in the words I have written, and lighten it during the purification week by resorting to self-introspection and resolving to make the Congress an organization in keeping with its creed, so that anyone who cares may without difficulty find it to be a living embodiment of its creed. I shall certainly be praying for its purification. Purity of this, the greatest national organization, cannot but help the Harijan movement, since the Congress is also pledged to the removal of the

curse. Finally, I request all friends, whether in India or outside, no matter to what faith or race they may belong, to pray that God may bless the forthcoming little penance."

At the conclusion of the fast on August 14, Gandhi wrote: "Its spiritual value for me has been inestimable. I was able during the seven days to understand more fully than hitherto the implications of what I had meant when from a hundred platforms I had declared that untouchability was not to be removed without the workers showing in their lives great purity of character. Therefore, so far as the fast was directed towards myself, it has, I hope, served its purpose. That I may fail to come up to the standard I visualized during the fast is possible, nay, probable. But no fast has ever proved an insurance against human frailties. We can only mount to success through failures. The fast was primarily and nominally intended for the hurt caused to Swami Lalnath and his friends at Ajmer at the hands of the sympathizers with the movement. But in reality, it is a call to all workers and sympathizers to be most exact and correct in approaching opponents. Utmost consideration and courtesy shown to them is the best propaganda for the movement. The fast was undertaken to impress upon the workers the truth that we can only win over the opponent by love, never by hate. Hate is the subtlest form of violence. We cannot be really non-violent and yet have hate in us. The dullest brain cannot fail to perceive that it is impossible by violence to wean millions of Caste Hindus from the evil of untouchability, which they have hitherto even taught to regard as an article of faith."

On August 23 the long-debated Temple Entry Bill proved abortive. On the floor of the Assembly the bill was opposed from many quarters on different grounds. Sir Henry Craik, explaining the attitude of the Government, said that the Government opposed it on a matter of principle and on the ground that the measure was impracticable and likely to lead to a serious invasion of private rights. Finally, Ranga Aiyer withdrew the bill. Commenting on the "ill-fated measure", Gandhi wrote:

"Harijan servants have need to exercise the greatest forbearance at this time of their trial. The Temple Entry Bill is gone. Sanatanists are now jubilant. We must not mind their joy. Only yesterday we were what they are today. We may not hate them but we must love them. Love is the only thing that can transform sanatanists. Let us realize that they are what they are, in spite of themselves. We have

no right to judge them or become impatient with them. Surely it is enough if we are true to ourselves, that is, if we act up to our belief and render full twenty shillings in the pound to the Harijans. Again let us realize that in their victory lies their defeat; in our humiliation lies our victory. Sanatanists can no longer plead the Temple Entry Bill in defence of their opposition to the entry of the Harijans to our temples by our common consent. Reformers can now prosecute the temple entry question with redoubled zeal. It is possible that those who were holding themselves aloof from the temple entry movement, on account of the Temple Entry Bill being prosecuted, will now, that it is out of the way, join the movement to have them opened without the aid of the law. For, be it remembered that the bill is not dead, it is only suspended. Legislation has to come, if sanatanists do not heartily co-operate with the reformers in having temples opened to Harijans on the same terms as to Caste Hindus."

About his future programme Gandhi wrote: "Whilst it is open to me to speak and write on politics, I propose to keep aloof from them as much as possible. The joy of the past self-restraint is too fresh to fade from the memory and to induce volubility of political speech. My partiality for the Harijan and kindred causes persists and it will persist, I hope, to the end of my life. And what is true of my general attitude is truer still of *Harijan*. No doubt I shall have to do more political work. I may be compelled to civil resistance. But *Harijan* will remain what it has been ever since its inception. It will rigorously eschew all politics. But now that I expect to have some time for them, it will, I hope, deal with constructive causes, more especially those that have direct connection with Harijans."

Cent Per Cent Swadeshi

1934

DURING the convalescence Gandhi gave part of his time to workers coming with their doubts. He laid the main emphasis on the work in the villages:

"I am sorry, I have not been able yet to bring home to anyone the message of spinning wheel in all its implications. The reason is that my life itself is not a true echo of the message. But it came home to me again and again during my nine months' peregrinations in India. We have not yet sufficiently realized that hand-spinning is a supplementary industry of universal application and scope in India. The village weaver cannot live but for the spinning wheel. He gets his yarn no doubt from the mills, but he is doomed to destruction, if he is to remain for ever dependent on the mills. Today, the spinning wheel has established itself in our economic life only to the extent that it is needed to minister to the clothing needs of the new class of khadi weavers that has sprung up during the past decade. But a large body like the Spinners' Association cannot justify its existence to fulfil that limited object. The idea at the back of khadi is that it is an industry supplementary to agriculture and co-extensive with it, that it is the life-breath of millions of Harijan weavers who derive their sustenance from it. The spinning wheel cannot be said to have been established in its own proper place in our life, until we can banish idleness from villages and make every village home a busy hive. Unemployment and idleness of millions must lead to bloody strife. Khadi is the only alternative to this and not the so-called socialism, which presupposes industrialism. The socialism that India can assimilate is the socialism of the spinning wheel. Let the village worker, therefore, make the wheel the central point of his activities.

"The worker will not only be spinning regularly but will be working for his bread with the adze or the spade or the last, as the case may be. All his hours minus the eight hours of sleep and rest will be

fully occupied with some work. He will have no time to waste. He will allow himself no laziness and allow others none. His life will be a constant lesson to his neighbours in ceaseless and joy-giving industry. Bodily sustenance should come from bodily labour, and intellectual labour is necessary for the culture of the mind. Division of labour there will necessarily be, but it will be a division into various species of bodily labour and not a division into intellectual labour to be confined to one class and bodily labour confined to another class. Our compulsory or voluntary idleness has to go. If it does not go, no panacea will be of any avail, and semi-starvation will remain the eternal problem that it is. He who eats two grains must produce four. Unless the law is accepted as universal, no amount of reduction in population would serve to solve the problem. If the law is accepted and observed, we have room enough to accommodate millions more to come.

"The village worker will thus be a living embodiment of industry. He will master all processes of khadi, from cotton-sowing and picking to weaving, and will devote all his thoughts to perfecting them. If he treats it as a science, it will not jar on him, but he will derive fresh joy from it everyday, as he realizes more and more its great possibilities. If he will go to the village as a teacher, he will go there no less as a learner. He will enter into every detail of village life, he will discover the village handicrafts and investigate the possibilities of their growth and their improvement. He may find the villagers completely apathetic to the message of khadi, but he will, by his life of service, compel interest and attention. Of course, he will not forget his limitations and will not engage in, for him, the futile task of solving the problem of agricultural indebtedness.

"Sanitation and hygiene will engage a good part of his attention. His home and surroundings will not only be a model of cleanliness, but he will help to promote sanitation in the whole village by taking the broom and the basket round.

"He will not attempt to set up a village dispensary or to become the village doctor. These are traps which must be avoided. I happened during my Harijan tour to come across a village where one of our workers who should have known better had built a pretentious building in which he had housed a dispensary and was distributing free medicine to the villages around. In fact, the medicines were being taken from home to home by volunteers and the dispensary was

described as boasting a register of 1,200 patients a month. I had to criticize this very severely. That was not the way to do village work, I told him. His duty was to inculcate lessons of hygiene and sanitation in the village folk and thus to show them the way of preventing illness, rather than attempt to cure them. I asked him to leave the palace-like building and to hire it out to the local board and to settle in thatched huts. All that one need stock in the way of medicines is quinine, castor oil and iodine and the like. The worker should concentrate more on helping people realize the value of personal and village cleanliness and maintaining it at all cost.

"Then he will interest himself in the welfare of village Harijans. His home will ever be open to them. In fact, they will turn to him naturally for help in their troubles and difficulties. If the village folk will not suffer him to have Harijan friends in his house situated in their midst, he must take up his residence in the Harijan quarters.

"A word about the knowledge of the alphabet. It has its place, but I should warn you against a misplaced emphasis on it. Do not proceed on the assumption that you cannot proceed with rural instruction without first teaching the children or the adults how to read and write. Lots of useful information on the current affairs, history, geography and elementary arithmetic, can be given by word of mouth before the alphabet is touched. The eyes, the ears, and the tongue come before the hand. Reading comes before writing and drawing before tracing the letters of the alphabet. If this natural method is followed, the understanding of the children will have a much better opportunity of development than when it is under check by beginning the children's training with the alphabet.

"The worker's life will be in tune with the village life. He will not pose as a litterateur in his books, loath to listen to details of humdrum life. On the contrary, the people, whenever they see him, will find him busy with his tools—spinning wheel, loom, adze, spade, etc.—and always responsive to their meanest inquiries. He will always insist on working for his bread. God has given to everyone the capacity of producing more than his needs and, if he will only use his resourcefulness, he will not be in want of occupation suited to his capacities, however poor they may be. It is more likely than not that the people will gladly maintain him, but it is probable that in some places he may be given a cold shoulder. He will still plod on. It is likely that in some villages he may be boycotted for his pro-Harijan proclivities.

Let him in that case approach Harijans and look to them to provide him with food. The labourer is always worthy of his hire and, if he conscientiously serves them, let him not hesitate to accept his food from Harijans, always provided that he gives more than he takes. In the very early stages, of course, he will draw his meagre allowance from a central fund where such is possible.

"I have deliberately left out the question of the cow. The village worker will find it difficult to tackle the question and will not attempt it, except to the extent of educating the people in the theory of it. We have not yet hit upon the best way of curing dead cattle's hide and dyeing it, as also the best means of protecting the cow. In Gujarat the buffalo problem complicates the situation. We have got to make the people realize that to encourage the buffalo is to allow the cow to die.

"Remember that our weapons are spiritual. It is a force that works irresistibly, if imperceptibly. Its progress is geometrical rather than arithmetical. It never ceases so long as there is a propeller behind. The background of all your activities has, therefore, to be spiritual. Hence the necessity for the strictest purity of conduct and character.

"You will not tell me that this is an impossible programme, that you have not the qualifications for it. That you have not fulfilled it so far should be no impediment in your way. If it appeals to your reason and your heart, you must not hesitate. Do not fight shy of an experiment. The experiment itself will provide the momentum for more and more effort."

After the year of probation, the first article that Gandhi wrote for *Harijan* was on swadeshi. "As I was travelling far and wide," said he, "I had the opportunity of observing things and of seeing how the swadeshi organizations were functioning. I came to the conclusion that the existing practice was an unconscious fraud upon the public and that many workers of ability were wasting their energy in a vain effort. They were practising self-deception."

He explained himself thus:

"We were holding exhibitions of things that were in no need of any special help or of advertisement for their sale. In their case, our interposition can either stimulate the prices of their wares or set up unhealthy rivalry between flourishing but competing firms. We may profess gratuitously help textile, sugar and rice mills and, respectively, destroy the village spinning wheel, the handloom and their product,

khadi, the village cane-crusher and its product, the vitamin-laden and nourishing *gur* or molasses, and the hand-pounder and its product, unpolished rice, whose pericarp, which holds the vitamins, is left intact by these pounders. Our clear duty is, therefore, to investigate the possibility of keeping in existence the village spinning wheel, the village crusher and the village pounder, and by advertising their products, discovering their qualities, ascertaining the condition of the workers and the number displaced by the power-driven machinery and discovering the methods of improving them, whilst retaining all their village character, to enable them to stand the competition of the mills. How terribly and how criminally we have neglected them! Here, there is no antagonism to the textile or the sugar or the rice mills. Their products must be preferred to the corresponding foreign products. If they were in danger of extinction from foreign competition, they should receive the needed support. But they stand in no such need. They are flourishing in spite of foreign competition. What is needed is protection of the village crafts and the workers behind them from the crushing competition of the power-driven machinery, whether it is worked in India or in foreign lands. It may be that khadi, *gur* and unpolished rice have no intrinsic quality and they should die. But, except for khadi, not the slightest effort has been made, so far as I am aware, to know anything about the fate of tens of thousands of villagers who were earning their livelihood through crushing cane and pounding rice. Surely, there is in this work enough for an army of patriots. The reader will say 'but this is very difficult work'. I admit. But it is most important and equally interesting. I claim that this is true, fruitful and cent per cent swadeshi.

"But I have as yet only touched the fringe of the question. I have merely sampled three big organized industries and shown how voluntary swadeshi agencies need to concentrate their attention solely on the corresponding unorganized industries that are dying for want of voluntary and intelligent organized help. The recent resolution of the Working Committee on swadeshi means all this and much more. It provides limitless work for the creative genius in the country."

The article on swadeshi created great interest in the readers, and stimulated an independent thinking. *Harijan* dealt with the questions under "How does this new swadeshi differ from the old?"

"The old emphasized the indigenous nature of the products, irrespective of the method or the produce or the prospects of the product.

I have ruled out the organized industries, not because they are not swadeshi, but because they do not need any special support. They can stand on their own legs and, in the present state of our awakening, can easily command a market. According to the new orientation, if it is new, I would certainly have our swadeshi organizations to seek out all the village industries and find out how they are faring. We will have experts and chemists who will be prepared to place their knowledge at the disposal of villagers. We will, through our experts, offer to test the articles manufactured by village handicraftsmen and make them suggestions to improve their wares and would sell them, if they would accept our conditions."

"Would you take up any and every handicraft?"—to this query he replied: "Not necessarily, I should examine each of them, find out their place in the economy of the village life and, if I see that they must be encouraged because of inherent merit, I should do so. Now, for instance, I should be loath to allow village broom to be replaced by the modern broomstick or brush. I would ask Mrs. Gandhi and other women of the household to tell me about the relative merits of both. Mind you, I would consider the advantage from all points of view. Thus, the village broom, I should think, must be preferred because it indicates tenderness and kindness to small life, whereas the brush makes a clean sweep of those things. Thus, I should see a whole philosophy behind the broom, for I do not think the Creator makes any distinction between the minute insects and (in His estimation) minute men. Thus I should pick up all kinds of village crafts and industries which are about to die and deserve revival, both because of their intrinsic merit and their other useful aspects, and I should thus go on making discoveries. Take our trifling tooth-sticks, for instance. I am quite sure, if you were to deprive the bulk of Bombay citizens of their tooth-sticks, their teeth would suffer. I cannot contemplate with equanimity the modern tooth-brush replacing the tooth-stick. These brushes are unhygienic. Once used, they deserve to be thrown away. However much disinfectants you may use to sterilize them, they can never be as good as fresh ones. But the *babul* or *neem* tooth-stick is used once for all and has highly astringent properties. Again, it serves the purpose of a tongue-scraper. The West has yet to discover anything so hygienic as the Indian tooth-stick. You may not know that a doctor in South Africa claimed to have controlled tuberculosis among the Bantu miners by insisting on the regular use by

them of these tooth-sticks. I would be no party to the advertisement of tooth-brushes even when they are made in India. I should declare my preference for the tooth-stick. This is cent per cent swadeshi. If I take care of it, the rest will take care of itself. Ask me to define the right angle and I should do it quite easily, but do not ask me to define the angles between the acutest and the most obtuse you can make. If I have the definition of a right angle, I can make whatever angle I need. Though swadeshi is eloquent enough as its own definition, I have called mine cent per cent swadeshi, because swadeshi is in danger of being watered down. Cent per cent swadeshi gives sufficient scope for the most insatiable ambition for service and can satisfy every kind of talent."

"You see swaraj at the end of it?" asked a critic. "Why not?" replied Gandhi. "Once I said in spinning wheel lies swaraj, next I said in prohibition lies swaraj. In the same way I would say in cent per cent swadeshi lies swaraj. Of course, it is like the blind men describing the elephant. All of them are right and yet not wholly right. If we tap all our resources, I am quite sure we can be again the richest country in the world, which we were, I suppose, at one time. We can repeat the phenomena, if we cease to be idle and profitably occupy the idle hours of the millions. All that we need is to be industrious, not like a machine, but like the busy bee."

Harijan was devoted to practical suggestions for helping the village industries. Tanning, for instance, occupied full three columns of the journal. Gandhi, the sandal-maker at Phoenix, wrote an article on the "Village tanning and its possibilities":

"Village tanning is as ancient as India itself. No one can say when tanning became a degraded calling. It could not have been so in the ancient times. But we know today that one of the most useful and indispensable industries has consigned probably a million of people to hereditary untouchability. An evil day dawned upon this unhappy country when labour began to be despised and, therefore, neglected. Millions of those who were the salt of the earth, on whose industry this country depended for its very existence, came to be regarded as the low class and the microscopic leisured few became the privileged classes, with the tragic result that India suffered morally and materially. Which was the greater of the two losses it is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate. But the criminal neglect of the peasants and artisans has reduced us to pauperism, dullness and habitual idleness.

With her magnificent climate, lofty mountains, mighty rivers and an extensive seaboard, India has limitless resources, whose full exploitation in her villages should have prevented poverty and disease. But the divorce of intellect from body labour has made us perhaps the shortest-lived, most resourceless and most exploited nation on earth. The present state of village tanning is, perhaps, the best proof of my indictment.

"It is estimated that rupees nine crores worth of raw hide is annually exported from India and that much of it is returned to her in the shape of manufactured articles. This means not only a material, but also an intellectual drain. We miss the training we should receive in tanning and preparing innumerable articles of leather we need for our daily use.

"Tanning requires great technical skill. An army of chemists can find scope for their inventive talent in this great industry. There are two ways of developing it. One is the uplift of Harijans living in the villages and eking out a bare sustenance, living in filth and degradation and consigned to the village ghetto, isolated and away from the village proper. This way means part reorganization of the villages and taking art, education, cleanliness, prosperity and dignity to them. This means also the application of chemical talent to village uplift. Tanning chemists have to discover improved methods of tanning. The village chemist has to stoop to conquer. He has to learn and understand the crude village tanning, which is still in existence but which is fast dying owing to neglect, not to say want of support. But the crude method may not be summarily scrapped, at least not before a sympathetic examination. It has served well for centuries. It could not have done so, if it had no merit. The only research that I know in this direction is being carried on in Santiniketan and then it was started at the now defunct ashram at Sabarmati. I have not been able to keep myself in touch with the progress of experiment at Santiniketan. There is now every prospect of revival at the Harijan Ashram, which the Sabarmati ashram has now become. These experiments are mere drops in the ocean of possible research.

"Cow preservation is an article of faith in Hinduism. No Harijan worth his salt will kill cattle for food. But, having become untouchable, he has learnt the evil habit of eating carrion. He will not kill a cow but will eat with the greatest relish the flesh of a dead cow. It may be physiologically harmless. But psychologically there is nothing

perhaps so repulsive as carrion-eating. And yet, when a dead cow is brought to a Harijan tanner's dwelling, it is a day of rejoicing for the whole household. Children dance round the carcass, and as the animal is flayed, they take hold of bones or pieces of flesh and throw them at one another. As a tanner who is living at the Harijan Ashram, describing the scenes at his own now forsaken home, tells me, the whole family is drunk at the sight of the dead animal. I know how hard I have found it working among the Harijans to wean them from the soul-destroying habit of eating carrion. Reformed tanning means the automatic disappearance of carrion-eating.

"Well, here is the use for high intelligence and the art of dissection. Here is also a mighty step in the direction of cow preservation. The cow must die at the hands of the butcher, unless we learn the art of increasing her capacity of milk-giving, unless we improve her stock and make her male progeny more useful for the field and carrying burdens, unless we make scientific use of all her excreta as manure and unless, when she and hers die, we are prepared to make the wiser use of her hide, bone, flesh, entrails, etc.

"I am just now concerned only with the carcass. It is well to remember here that the village tanner, thank God, has to deal with the carcass only, and not the slaughtered animal. He has no means of bringing the dead animal in a decent way. He lifts it, drags it, and this injures the skin and reduces the value of the hide. If the villagers and the public knew the priceless and noble service the tanner renders, they will provide easy and simple method of carrying it, so as not to injure the skin at all.

"The next process is flaying the animal. This requires great skill. I am told that none, not even surgeons, do this better than the village tanner does with his village knife. I have inquired of those who should know. They have not been able to show me an improvement upon the village tanner. This is not to say that there is none better. I merely give the reader the benefit of my own limited experience. The village tanner has no use for the bone. He throws it away. Dogs hover round the carcass, whilst it is flayed. The bones, if powdered fine, apart from their other uses, make valuable manure. What remains after the dogs have taken away their share is transported to foreign countries, and returns to us in the shape of handles, buttons, etc.

The second way is urbanizing this great industry. This urbanization can do little good to the Harijans, much less to the villages. It is

a process of double drain from the villages. Urbanization in India is slow but sure death for her villages and villagers. Urbanization can never support ninety per cent of India's population, which is living in her 7,00,000 villages. To remove from these villages tanning and such other industries is to remove what little opportunity there still is for making skilled use of the hand and the head. And when the village handicrafts disappear, the villagers working only with their cattle on the field, with idleness for six or four months in the year, must be reduced to the level of the beast and be without proper nourishment, either of the mind or the body, and therefore, without joy and without hope.

"Here is work for the cent per cent swadeshi lover and scope for the harnessing of technical skill to the solution of a great problem. The work fells three apples with one throw. It serves the Harijans, it serves the villagers and it also means honourable employment for the middle class intelligentsia who are in search of employment. Add to this the fact that the intelligentsia have a proper opportunity of coming in direct touch with the villagers."

His time was now mainly devoted to village industries. Workers from all over India came to Wardha to discuss the new orientation in the constructive programme. The science and economics of khadi was being reconsidered. His talks with the prominent workers from Andhra dealt with the elimination of the commercial element from the production of khadi. "Khadi in a sense is purely an economic proposition," he said. "A khaddar organization must be a business concern before everything else. The democratic principle, therefore, can't apply to it. Democracy necessarily means a conflict of will and ideas, involving sometimes a war to the knife between different ideas. There can be no room for such conflict within a business concern. It must break to pieces under their weight. But a khadi organization is more than a business concern. It is a philanthropic institution designed to serve demos. Such an institution cannot be governed by popular fancy. There is no room in it for personal ambition.

"In reorganizing khadi production, you should not forget that the science of khadi, in some respects, works on diametrically opposite lines to that of ordinary business. You know how Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations,* after laying down certain principles according to which the economic phenomena are governed, went on to describe certain other things which constituted the 'disturbing factor' and

prevented economic laws from having free play. Chief among these was the 'human element'. Now it is this 'human element' on which the entire economics of khadi rests; and human selfishness, Adam Smith's 'pure economic motive', constitutes the 'disturbing factor' that has got to be overcome. What applies to the production of mill cloth, therefore, does not apply to khaddar. Debasing of the quality, adulterating, pandering to the baser tastes of humanity, are current staple in commercialized production; they have no place in khadi, nor has the principle of highest profit in khadi. And there should be no loss. Loss there is, because we, the workers, are still incompetent novices. In khadi, the prices realized return to the prime producers, the spinners, the others getting no more than their hire.

"Then, take the question of standardization. You cannot enforce it in khaddar. A poor ordinary spinner cannot always spin thread of a uniform quality. She is not a machine. Today she may be unwell, tomorrow her child may be ill and her mind will be distracted. If you have love for the poor spinner or her child, you will not insist on having smooth, even thread always, but be satisfied with what she can give, so long as she gives her best in the condition in which she finds herself at the moment. The sacred touch of her hand gives life and history to khadi which the machine-made yarn can never give. The art that is in the machine-made article appeals only to the eye, the art in khadi appeals first to the heart and then to the eye. I would, therefore, deprecate the bleaching of khadi. It adds to the cost of production, affects the durability of cloth and makes the detection of fraud ever so much difficult. We must not pamper the popular fancy, but seek to cultivate a new taste. A few washes in the ordinary course will suffice to make khadi perfectly white and give it a softness which bleaching destroys. We must make everybody contribute his or her mite to reduce all unnecessary cost.

"If, then, we treat khadi, not as an article of commerce, but as one necessary for the sustenance of the semi-starved millions, we must penetrate spinner's home and induce her to wear khadi made from her own yarn. This at once reduces the cost of production and ensures automatic distribution. So far, we have simply tried to manufacture khadi for the city people. From insignificant beginnings, the production of khaddar has grown to several lakhs per year. We have multiplied varieties. But that does not satisfy me any more. Khadi was conceived with a much more ambitious object, that is, to make our

villages starvation-proof. This is impossible, unless the villagers will wear khadi themselves, sending only the surplus to the cities. The singular secret of khadi lies in its saleability in the place of its production and use by the manufacturers themselves.

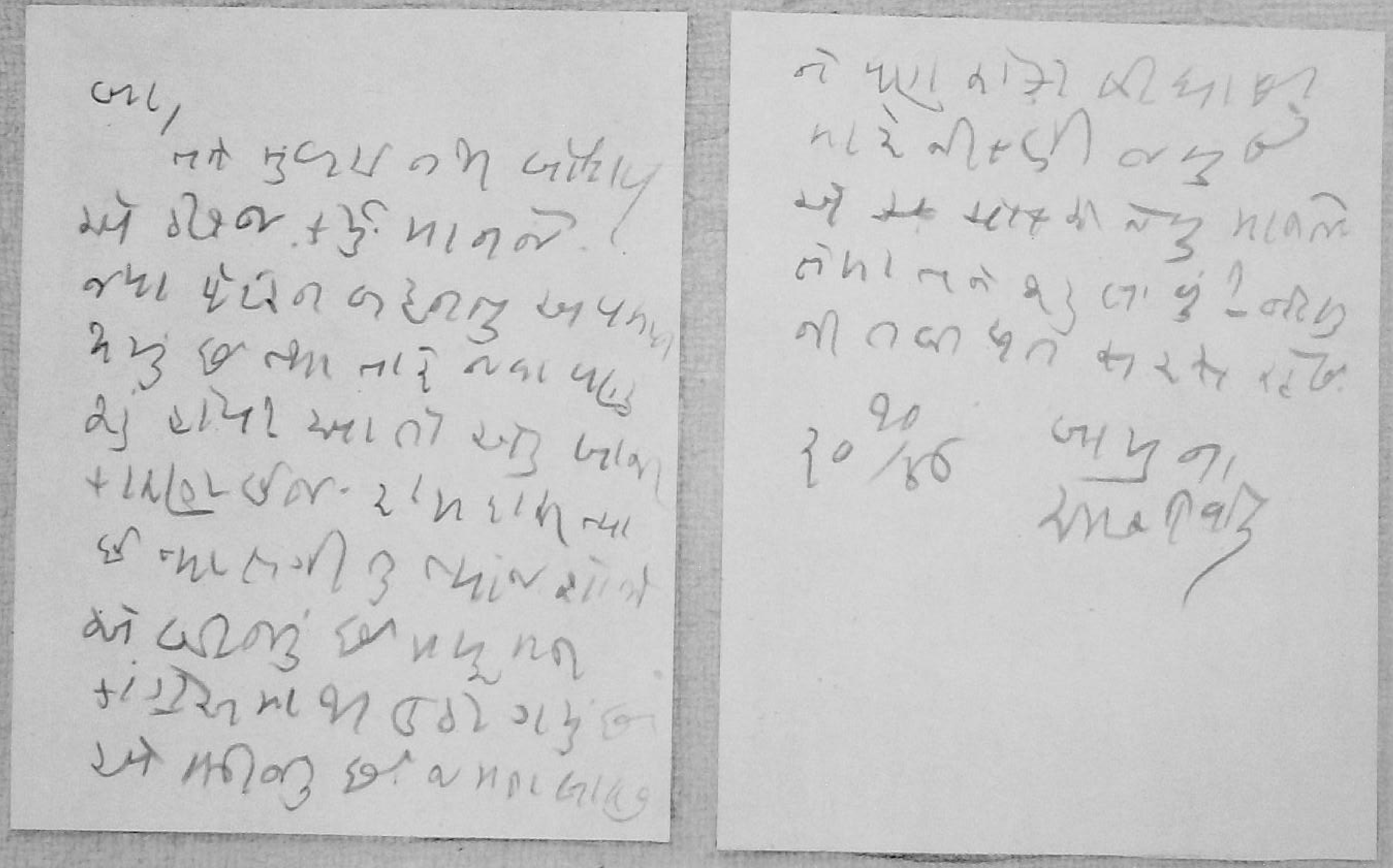
"Our overhead charges are today much too high for me. If we concentrate attention on the central mission of khadi, they will be considerably reduced. The rules governing the reduction of the price of khadi are somewhat, if not wholly, different from those that apply to purely commercial articles produced chiefly for profit. In khadi, there is a limitation to the improvement of tools. But there is no limitation to the improvement of human intelligence and honesty. If we despair of these two, we must despair of khadi. In khadi, therefore, we reduce the cost by eliminating middlemen as far as is consistent with the smooth running of the organization, which itself will be unnecessary when khadi is self-supporting and self-acting.

"The science of khadi is still in its infancy. With every new discovery that I make in it, the realization comes to me all the more vividly how little I know of that science. There is no other country in the world, with the possible exception of China, that is potentially so rich as India with its inexhaustible untapped reserves of man-power. Tap the reserves, and you at once banish poverty from this country; and hand-spinning is the means by which this could be done. All that we have done so far in khadi was necessary. Without it we could not have reached the present stage. But we have yet only touched the fringe of the problem. We have now need to take another step. If, therefore, you will have autonomy for Andhra khadi, you can have it for the asking and without much trouble about the discharge of your obligations. There is nothing to prevent you from working along the lines suggested by me."

His insistence on moral truths as something very fundamental in all walks of life brought forth severe criticism. "Don't you think that a preconceived idea of a God, Truth or Reality might colour the whole trend of our search and hence be a great impediment and may defeat the very purpose of our life?" Gandhi replied: "No search is possible without some workable assumptions. If we grant nothing, we find nothing. Ever since its commencement, the world, the wise and the foolish included, has proceeded upon the assumption that if we are, God is, and that, if God is not, we are not. And since belief in God is co-existent with the humankind, existence of God is treated as

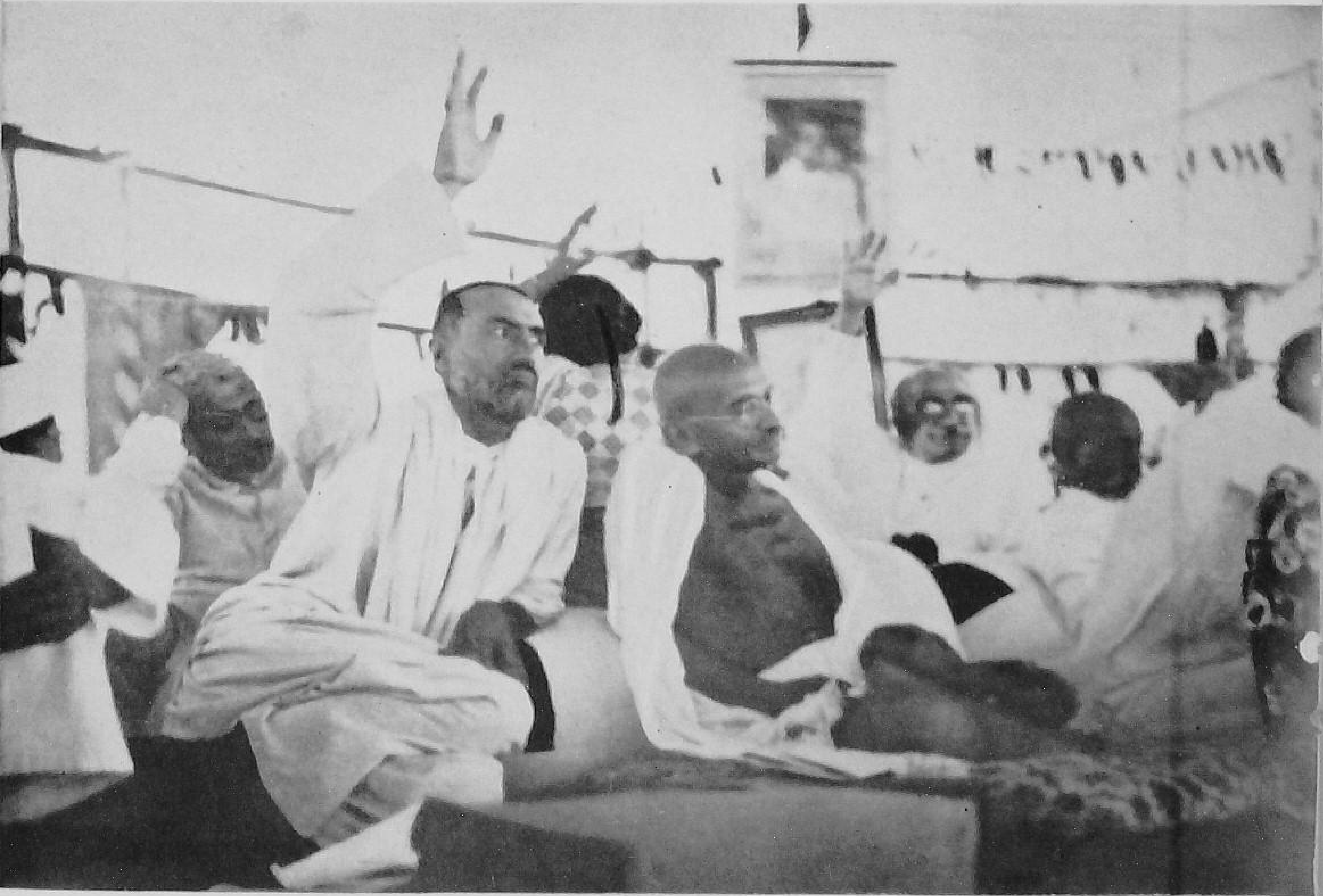
a fact more definite than the fact that the sun is. This living faith has solved a large number of puzzles of life. It has alleviated our misery. It sustains us in life, it is our one solace in death. The very search for Truth becomes interesting and worthwhile, because of this belief. But search for Truth is search for God. Truth is God. God is, because Truth is. We embark upon the search, because we believe that there is Truth and that it can be found by diligent search and meticulous observance of the well-known and well-tried rules of search. There is no record in history of the failure of such search. Even the atheists who have pretended to disbelieve in God have believed in Truth. The trick they have performed is that of giving God another, not a new, name. His names are Legion. Truth is the crown of them all.

"What is true of God is true, though in a less degree, of the assumption of the truth of some fundamental moralities. As a matter of fact, they are implied in the belief in God or Truth. Departure from these has landed the truants in endless misery. Difficulty of practice should not be confused with disbelief. A Himalayan expedition has also its prescribed conditions of success. Difficulty of fulfilling the conditions does not make the expedition impossible. It only adds interest and zest to the search. Well, this expedition in search of God or Truth is infinitely more than numberless Himalayan expeditions and, therefore, much more interesting. If we have no zest for it, it is because of the weakness of our faith. What we see with our physical eyes is more real to us than the only Reality. We know that the appearances are deceptive. And yet we treat trivialities as realities. To see the trivialities as such is half the battle won. It constitutes more than half the search after Truth or God. Unless we disengage ourselves from these trivialities, we have not even the leisure for the great search, or is it to be reserved for our leisure hours?"



Courtesy: K. Baja

Gandhi's letter to Kasturbai, dated October 20, 1934

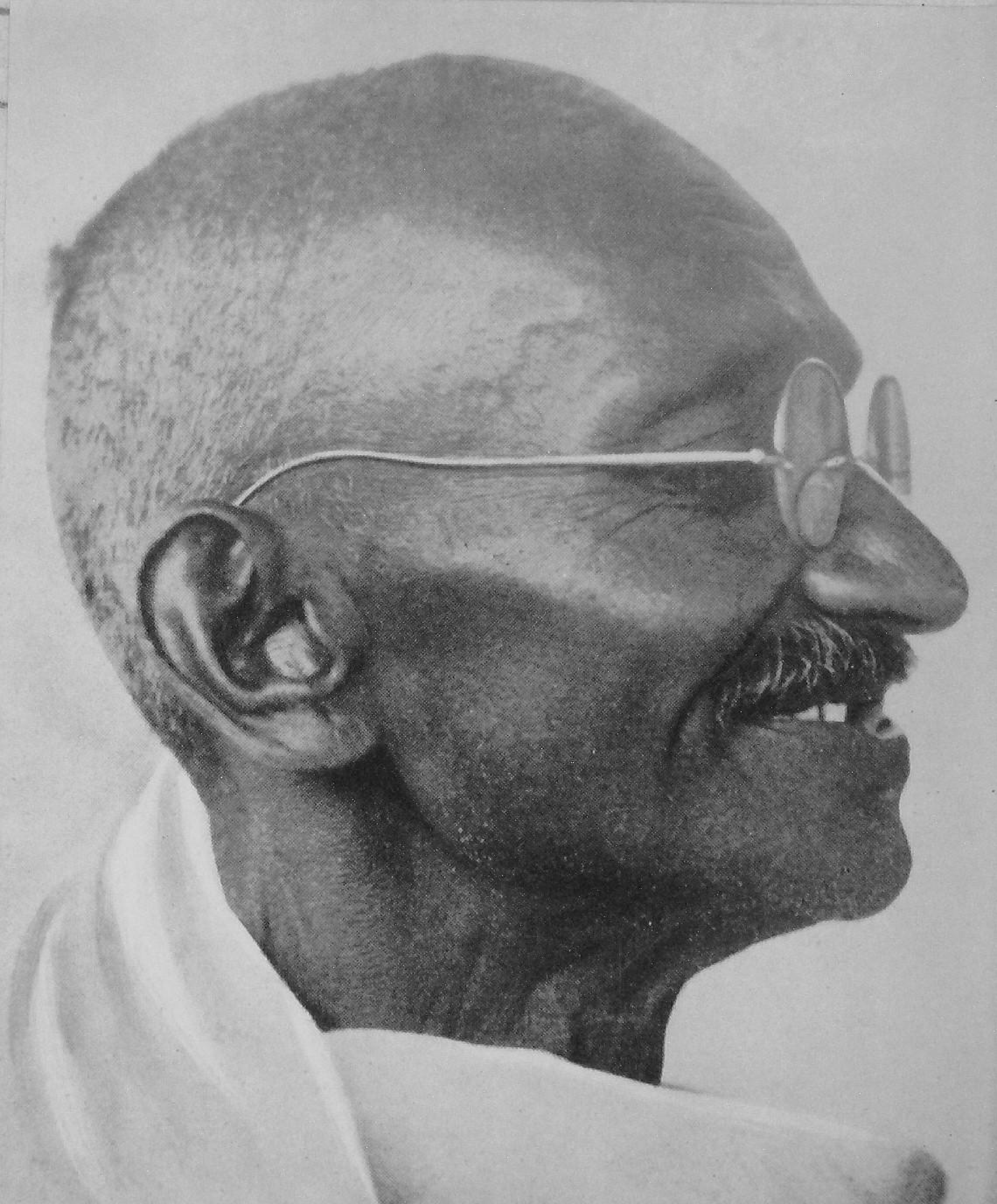


From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi arriving to attend Subjects Committee meeting of the Congress, Bombay, October 1934
Gandhi seated with Ghaffar Khan, Dr. Ansari, Azad and Vallabhbhai Patel at the A.-I.C.C., Bombay, October 1934

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi arriving at the open session of the Congress to announce his retirement, Bombay, October 28, 1934



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Gandhi, October 1934

Retirement From Congress

1934

GANDHI's activities and utterances gave rise to the rumour that he intended to leave the Congress altogether. Gandhi confirmed it and gave reasons in a long statement, dated Wardhaganj, September 17, 1934:

"The rumour that I had contemplated severing all physical connection with the Congress was true. However, for the considerations urged by my friends who had come to Wardha during the meetings of the Working Committee and the Parliamentary Board last week, I agreed with them that it might be safer for me to leave the Congress, if at all, after the forthcoming Congress session. There was an intermediate course, suggested by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, of remaining in the Congress without participating in any active administration of the organization, but both Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad strongly disapproved of that course. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had agreed with me that the time had arrived for me to retire from the Congress, but many others would not endorse that view. After due consideration of all the pros and cons, I have adopted the safe and prudent course of postponing the final step at least till after the meeting of the Congress session in October. One attractive idea behind the insistence on postponement was that it would enable me to test the accuracy of my impression that a very large body of Congress intelligentsia were tired of my method and views, and the programme based upon them, that I was a hindrance rather than a help to the natural growth of the Congress, that, instead of remaining the most democratic and representative organization, it was dominated by my personality, that in it there was no free play of reason.

"If I am to test the truth or otherwise of my impression, naturally, I must put before the public the reasons on which my impression is based, and my own proposals based thereon. Congressmen might vote on them and thus clearly register their opinion.

"I must try to do this as briefly as I can. It has appeared to me that there is a growing and vital difference of outlook between many Congressmen and myself. I seem to be going in a direction just the opposite of what many of the most intellectual Congressmen would gladly and enthusiastically take, if they were not hampered by their unexampled loyalty to me. No leader can expect greater loyalty and devotion than I have received from these Congressmen, even when they have protested and signified their disapproval of the policies I have laid before the Congress. For me, any more to draw upon this loyalty and devotion is to put undue strain upon them. Their loyalty cannot blind my eyes to what appears to me to be fundamental differences between the Congress, the intelligentsia and me.

"Let me state them. I put the spinning wheel and khadi in the forefront. Hand-spinning by the Congress intelligentsia has all but disappeared. The general body of them have no faith in it and yet, if I could carry their reason with me, I would substitute the four-anna franchise by personal, daily, hand-spinning. The khadi clause of the Congress constitution has been almost a dead letter from the beginning and Congressmen have not been wanting who have reminded me that I am responsible for the hypocrisy and the evasion about the working of the khadi clause. I ought to have realized that it was not passed out of deep conviction, but largely out of personal loyalty to me. I must own that there is considerable force in this argument. Nevertheless my conviction is growing that if India is to win complete independence in terms of the toiling millions and through unadulterated non-violence, the spinning wheel and khadi have to be as natural to the educated few as to the partially unemployed and semi-starved millions who, for not using their hands for the purpose for which nature has endowed man with them, have become almost like beasts of burden. The spinning wheel is an emblem of human dignity and equality in the truest sense of the term. It is the handmaid of agriculture. It is the nation's second lung. We are perishing because we are using only one lung, and yet only a few Congressmen have a living faith in the India-wide potency of the wheel. The removal of the khadi clause in the constitution would mean removal of the living link between the Congress and the millions whom it has from its inception sought to represent, and yet if it remains, it has to be rigidly enforced. But it cannot be, if a substantial majority of the Congressmen have no living faith in it.

"Take again the Parliamentary Board. Though the author of non-co-operation, I am quite convinced that in the present circumstances of the country and in the absence of any general scheme of civil resistance, a parliamentary party within the Congress is a necessary part of any programme that may be framed by the Congress, but there are sharp differences of opinion among us on that point. The force with which I urged the programme at the All-India Congress Committee meeting in Patna, I know, oppressed many of our best colleagues, but they hesitated to act according to their own conviction. Up to a point, suppression of one's views in favour of those of another, considered superior in wisdom or experience, is virtuous and desirable for healthy growth of organization; it becomes a terrible oppression when one is called upon to repeat the performance from day to day. Though I have never wished any such untoward result, I cannot conceal from me or the public the tragic fact that such has been my own experience. Many Congressmen have despaired of resisting me. This is a humiliating revelation to a born democrat—I make that claim of complete identification with the poorest of mankind, an intense longing to live no better than they and a corresponding conscious effort to approach that level to the best one's ability can entitle one to make it.

"I have welcomed the formation of the socialist group. Many of them are respected and self-sacrificing co-workers. With all this, I have fundamental differences with them on the programme published in their authorized pamphlets. But I would not, by reason of the moral pressure I may be able to exert, suppress the spread of ideas propounded in their literature. I may not interfere with the free expression of those ideas, however distasteful some of them may be to me. If they gain ascendancy in the Congress, as they well may, I cannot remain in the Congress. For, to be in active opposition should be unthinkable. Though identified with many organizations during a long period of public service, I have never accepted that position.

"Then, there is the policy advocated by some with regard to the Indian states which is wholly different from what I have advised. I have given many anxious hours to the question but I have not been able to alter my view.

"Even on untouchability, my method of approach is perhaps different from that of many, if not of most Congressmen. For me, this is a deeply religious and moral issue. Many consider that it was a

profound error for me to have disturbed the course of the civil resistance struggle by taking up the question in the manner, and at the time, I did. I feel that I would have been untrue to myself if I had taken any other course.

"Last of all, take non-violence. After fourteen years of trial, it still remains a policy with the majority of Congressmen, whereas it is a fundamental creed with me. That the Congressmen do not still regard non-violence as a creed is no fault of theirs. It is undoubtedly my own faulty presentation and still more the faulty execution that are responsible for this failure. I have no consciousness of any faulty presentation or execution, but it is the only possible inference from the fact that it has not yet become an integral part of the lives of Congressmen.

"And if there is uncertainty about non-violence, there must be still more about civil resistance. In spite of my twenty-seven years of study and practice of the doctrine, I cannot claim to know all about it. The field of research is necessarily limited, as occasions for civil resistance in a man's life must not be frequent. It can only come after voluntary obedience to authority, whether of parents, teachers or other elders, religious or secular. There need be no wonder that, as the only expert, however imperfect, among us, I should have come to the conclusion that it should, for some time to come, be limited only to me. This was necessary in order to minimize the errors and the mischief proceeding from them, as also to explore its hidden possibilities, but again for no fault of the Congressmen. It has been increasingly difficult for me to carry the reason of Congressmen with me in all the resolutions recently passed on the subject, whilst they have generously voted for them.

"Even the memory of the sense of oppression which they experienced at the time of voting, without an intelligent belief in these resolutions, oppresses me just as much as they were oppressed. They and I must be free from this oppression, if we are at all to grow in pursuit of what we believe to be the common goal. Hence it is necessary for all concerned to act freely and boldly according to their own convictions.

"I have, in my Patna statement recommending the suspension of civil resistance, drawn attention to the failure of civil resistance to achieve two obvious results. If we had the full non-violent spirit in us, it should have been self-evident and should not have escaped

the notice of the Government. Their ordinances were certainly not warranted by any of the misdeeds done by or imputed to us. They were undoubtedly intended to break our spirit anyhow. But it would be wrong if we contended that civil resisters were above reproach. If we are non-violent through and through, our non-violence would have been self-evident. Nor were we able to show to the terrorists that we had greater faith in our non-violence than they in their violence. On the contrary, many of us made them feel that we had the same spirit of violence in our breasts that they had. Only, we did not believe in the deeds of violence. The terrorists rightly argued that if the spirit of violence was common to both, the policy of doing or not doing violence was a matter of opinion. I need not repeat what I have said before, that the country has made great strides towards non-violence indeed and that many have exhibited great courage and self-sacrifice. All I want to say is that ours has not been unadulterated non-violence in thought, word and deed. It is now my paramount duty to devise ways and means of showing demonstrably to the Government and the terrorists the efficacy of non-violence as a means of achieving the right thing, including freedom in every sense of the term.

"For this experiment to which my whole life is dedicated, I need complete detachment and absolute freedom of action. Satyagraha of which civil resistance is but a part is to me the universal law of life. Truth is my God. I can only search Him through non-violence and in no other way. And the freedom of my country, as of the world, is surely included in the search for Truth. I cannot suspend this search for anything in this world or another. I have entered the political life in pursuit of this search, and if it cannot carry the reason as well as the heart of the educated Congressmen when I say that this search necessarily includes complete independence and many other things which may be part of Truth, it is plain I should work single-handed in the implicit faith that what I fail to make clear to my countrymen today shall be clear to them some day of itself; or, if God wills it, through some apt word He may put in my mouth or some apt work which He may prompt me to do in matters of such tremendous importance. A mechanical vote or a grudging assent is wholly inadequate, if not injurious to the cause itself.

"I have referred to the common goal, but I have begun to doubt if all the Congressmen understand the same thing by the expression

'Complete Independence'. I want for India complete independence in the full English sense of that English term. For me Purna Swaraj has an infinitely larger meaning than Complete Independence, but even Purna Swaraj is not self-explained. No one word or compound expression will give us a meaning which all can understand. Hence, on several occasions I have given several definitions of swaraj. I hold that they are all hopelessly incomplete even when put together, but I do not wish to labour on it.

"My mention of the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of giving a complete definition leads me to another serious point of difference between many Congressmen and myself. I have always said since 1909, that means and end are convertible terms and that, therefore, where the means are various and even contradictory the end must be different and even contradictory. We have always control over the means and never on the end. But we may not bother about its content, if we all employ identical means with identical connotation for them. It will be admitted that many Congressmen do not admit this—to me—obvious truth. They believe that the end justifies the means, whatever they may be.

"And it is the sum total of these differences which has sterilized the existing Congress programme, because members who gave their lip-assent to it have naturally failed to reduce it to practice, and yet I have no other programme save the Congress programme now before the country, that is, untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, total prohibition, hand-spinning with khadi, cent per cent swadeshi, in the sense of the revival of village industries and general reorganization of the seven lakhs of villages, which ought to give all satisfaction that one's love of one's country may demand. Personally, I would like to bury myself in an Indian village, preferably in a Frontier village. If the Khudai Khidmatgars are truly non-violent, they will contribute the largest share to the promotion of the non-violent spirit and of Hindu-Muslim unity. For, if they are non-violent in thought, word and deed, and are real lovers of Hindu-Muslim unity, surely through them we should see the accomplishment of the two things we need most in this country. The Afghan menace which we dread so much should then be a thing of the past. I am, therefore, yearning to test the truth for myself of the claim that they have imbibed the spirit of non-violence and are believers, in the heart, of the unity of Hindus, Musalmans and others. I should like also personally to deliver the

message of the spinning wheel to them in this and various such other ways. I would love to serve the Congress in my own humble manner, whether I am in or outside it.

"I have reserved to the last the reference to the growing corruption in our ranks. I have already said enough about it in the public. In spite of all I have said, the Congress still remains in my estimation the most powerful and the most representative organization in the country. It has a history of uninterrupted noble service and self-sacrifice, and from its inception it has weathered storms as no other institution has done. It has commanded a measure of self-sacrifice of which any other country would be proud. It holds today the largest number of devoted men and women of unimpeachable character. If I must leave this organization, I should not do so without a wrench and I should do it only when I am convinced that being outside I would serve it, that is, the country, better than by being in it.

"I propose to test the feeling of the Congress on all the points I have touched by placing before the Subjects Committee certain resolutions giving effect to the views enunciated above. The first amendment I would propose is to replace the words 'legitimate and peaceful' by 'truthful and non-violent'. I should not have done so but for the furore of opposition which was raised against the utterly innocent use by me of the two adjectives in the place of 'legitimate and peaceful'. If Congressmen really believe in the necessity of truthfulness and non-violence for the attainment of our goal, they should have no hesitation about accepting the unequivocal adjectives.

"The second amendment would be to replace the four-anna franchise by the delivery by every member to a Congress depot of 2,000 rounds (one round equal to four feet) per month of well-twisted even yarn of not less than 15 counts spun by himself or herself. The arguments for and against need not be mentioned here. If we are to be a truly democratic body representing even the lowest paid labour, we cannot do it better than by devising a simple labour franchise. Hand-spinning is by the common consent the lowest paid labour and yet the most dignified. It is the nearest approach to adult franchise within the means of almost every one who is willing to labour for the sake of the country for half an hour daily. Is it too much to expect the intelligentsia and the propertied classes to recognize the dignity of labour, irrespective of the material benefit it brings? Is not labour, like learning, its own reward? If we are true servants of the masses,

we would take pride in spinning for their sakes. I recall what the late Maulana Mahomed Ali used to repeat from many a platform. As the sword was the symbol of brute force and might, he would say, the wheel or the *takli* was the symbol of non-violence, humility and service. When the wheel was accepted as part of the national flag, it was surely implied that the spinning wheel would hum in every household. If Congressmen do not believe in the message of the wheel, we must remove it from the national flag, and khaddar from the constitution. It is intolerable that there should be unashamed fraud in the observance of the khaddar clause.

"The third amendment I would propose would be that no one shall be entitled to vote at any Congress election whose name has not been on the Congress register continuously for six months without default, and who has been a habitual wearer wholly of khaddar for that period. A great difficulty has been experienced in the working of the khaddar clause. It can be easily avoided by giving powers, subject to appeal to the President of the Congress and to the chairmen of respective committees, to decide the question whether a particular voter is or is not a habitual wearer wholly of khaddar within the meaning of the constitution. No one is to be considered such a wearer who, at the time of voting, is not manifestly wholly clad in khaddar. But no rule, however carefully and strictly worded, can produce satisfactory results, if a large number do not voluntarily carry it out.

"Experience has shown that the Congress is an unwieldy organization, even with its 6,000 delegates. In practice, the full number has never attended the Congress, and when the Congress register nowhere contains a truly representative list, the delegation can hardly be claimed to be a reality. I would, therefore, have an amendment reducing the number to not more than 1,000 delegates, nor more than one delegate per every thousand voters. To have the full number of delegates would mean one million voters, not an over-ambitious hope in a country having a population of 315 millions. The Congress would, by this amendment, gain in substance what it may lose in the show of numbers. The spectacular part of the session would be kept intact by making ample provision for the visitors, but the reception committee will be spared the wholly unnecessary anxiety of having to provide accommodation for an unwieldy number of delegates. Let us recognize the fact that the Congress enjoys a prestige, democratic in character and in influence, not by the number of delegates and

visitors it has drawn to its annual functions but by the ever-increasing amount of service it has rendered. Western democracy is on its trial. If it has already proved a failure, may it be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its buttress. Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today. Nor is bulk a true test of democracy. True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible methods. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within.

"I have mentioned here only the principal amendments I should propose in the constitution. There would be other resolutions bringing out clearly the points I have touched upon in the foregoing paras. I do not need to burden this statement with them.

"My fear is that even the amendments I have named will hardly commend themselves to the large number of Congressmen who will attend the Congress. Nevertheless, if I am to guide the policy of the Congress, I hold them and the resolutions in keeping with the spirit of the statement to be essential for the earliest attainment of our goal. No voluntary organization can succeed in its purpose without its resolutions and policies being carried out whole-heartedly by its members, and no leader can give a good account of himself if his lead is not faithfully, ungrudgingly and intelligently followed. And this is truest of a leader who has no resource at his disposal but what truth and non-violence can supply. It follows, therefore, that there is no room for compromise in the essentials of the programme I have endeavoured to adumbrate in these paras. Let the Congressmen, therefore, examine it dispassionately and on its own merits. They must eliminate me from their consideration and give effect to the dictates of their reason."

On October 26 the Congress held its annual session in Bombay, three and a half years after its last normal session in Karachi. Nearly 60,000 people had assembled in the Congress Nagar, which was named after Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, to witness the historic assembly. Gandhi's intention to retire from the Congress signified only the beginning of a new chapter; he wanted to launch upon bigger constructive work. The Congress looked up to Gandhi for guidance and meant to stick to the method of satyagraha for gaining independence.

Rajendra Prasad in his presidential address observed: "The method is crystal clear. It is active dynamic non-violent mass action. We may fail once, we may fail twice; but we are bound to succeed some day. Many have lost their lives and all. Many more have sacrificed themselves in their struggle for freedom. Let us not be deterred by the difficulties which confront us nor diverted from our straight course by fear or favour. Our weapons are unique and the world is watching the progress of great experiment with interest and high expectation. Let us be true to our creed and firm in our determination. Satyagraha in its active application may meet with temporary setbacks, but it knows no defeat. It is itself a great victory."

The Congress passed a resolution endorsing the decisions already taken by the A.-I.C.C. in Patna, especially those in regard to the Parliamentary Board, and its policy and programme, and the resolution on swadeshi. The Working Committee view of the Communal Award was affirmed, by virtue of which the candidates fighting the elections to the legislatures on the Congress ticket were forbidden to make the communal issue a plank in their electioneering campaign, and members elected to the legislatures were required to keep themselves neutral on the questions relating to the award. The Communal Award was to be modified by mutual agreement as was the case, for instance, with the Yeravda pact.

The Congress condemned the white paper and after rejecting the British Government's proposals for the framing of the prospective bill, it declared that the only satisfactory alternative was a "constitution drawn up by a constituent assembly elected on a basis of adult suffrage or as near it as possible", and, if necessary, by separate electorates. The restrictions, not the liberties, were the essence of the act, and by their rigorous enforcement the British Government intended to maintain their hold on India.

By a special resolution, the Congress congratulated the nation on the heroic sacrifices and the sufferings undergone by thousands of civil resisters and placed on record its conviction that "without non-violent non-co-operation and civil resistance there would never have been the phenomenal mass awakening that has taken place throughout the country." Whilst recognizing the desirability and the necessity of the suspension of the civil resistance campaign except with reference to Gandhi, the Congress reiterated its faith in non-violent non-co-operation and civil resistance "as a better means of achieving

swaraj than the methods of violence which result in terrorism both by the oppressed and the oppressors."

On the All-India Village Industries Association the following resolution was passed:

"Whereas the organizations claiming to advance swadeshi have sprung up all over the country, with and without the assistance of Congressmen, and whereas much confusion has arisen in the public mind as to the nature of swadeshi, and whereas the aim of the Congress has been, from its inception, progressive identification with the masses, and whereas village reorganization and reconstruction is one of the items in the constructive programme of the Congress, and whereas such reconstruction necessarily implies the revival and encouragement of dead or dying village industries besides the central industry of spinning, and whereas this work, like the reorganization of hand-spinning, is possible only through concentrated and special effort, unaffected by and independent of the political activities of the Congress, Shri J. C. Kumarappa is here authorized to form, under the advice and the guidance of Gandhiji, an association called the All-India Village Industries Association as part of the activities of the Congress. The said association shall work for the revival and encouragement of the said industries and for the moral and physical advancement of the villages, and shall have power to frame its own constitution, to raise funds, and to perform such acts as may be necessary for the fulfilment of its objects."

A consequential resolution was passed on the subject of Congress exhibitions and demonstrations: "The reception committee shall be henceforth relieved of the task of organizing the exhibitions and the spectacular demonstrations. The duty of organizing these is hereby entrusted to the All-India Spinners' Association and the All-India Village Industries Association, which bodies shall organize these functions so as to combine instruction with entertainment of the general public, especially of the villagers, with the sole view to illustrate and popularize the activities of the two associations and generally to demonstrate the potentiality of village life."

The main issue before the Congress was a change in its constitution as recommended by Gandhi. Most of his amendments were substantially accepted. The Congress delegation was reduced to a maximum of 2,000 members apportioned between the rural and the urban areas in the proportion of approximately 3:1. The A.-I.C.C. was to

be continued at half its strength and the delegates were to be elected at the rate of 1 to 500 primary members; modulation of the strength of delegates strictly to the membership of the Congress enunciated in Gandhi's draft was accepted, thereby making the delegates not visitors at a spectacular gathering but representatives of the nation charged with the duty of electing an all-India executive. By another amendment in the Congress constitution, the right of selecting the Working Committee of fourteen members from among the members of the A.-I.C.C. vested with the president.

Gandhi wanted the creed to be changed to "truthful and non-violent" methods in place of "peaceful and legitimate" methods but the A.-I.C.C. did not accept it and suggested that the amendment be circulated to the provinces for opinion. A separate resolution was passed prescribing a khaddar wear: "No member shall be eligible for election to any office or to any Congress committee unless he is a habitual wearer of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar." And for the first time, a labour qualification was introduced: "No person shall be eligible to be a candidate for election to membership of any Congress committee, unless he or she has performed some manual labour continuously for six months immediately before the date of nomination for election, on behalf of or for the Congress, equal in value to 500 yards per month of well-spun yarn of over ten counts, and in time to eight hours per month. The form of acceptable labour alternative to spinning shall be prescribed from time to time by the Working Committee, in consultation with the provincial Congress committees and the All-India Village Industries Association."

On the last day of the session, October 28, there was a touching scene when Gandhi entered the pandal to sever his official connection with the Congress. The entire audience of 80,000 stood up to a man to show their respect to the great leader. A resolution of confidence in him was passed: "This Congress reiterates its confidence in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and is emphatically of opinion that he should reconsider his decision to retire from the Congress. But inasmuch as efforts to persuade him in that behalf have failed, this Congress, while reluctantly accepting his decision, places on record its deep sense of gratitude for the unique services rendered by him to the nation and notes with satisfaction his assurance that his advice and his guidance will be available to the Congress whenever necessary."

"My interest in the Congress organization," Gandhi stated, "will henceforth be confined to watching, from a distance, enforcement of principles for which the Congress stands. If we would be truthful through and through, we should recognize that the predominant part of the Congress programme has been progressively social, moral and economic. And it becomes a powerful programme because it is inevitably connected with the political, that is, attainment of freedom of the country from the foreign yoke not from foreign friendship, that is, voluntary intercourse on the terms of absolute equality with foreign nations. Let me also utter a warning. I hope no one will think that the khaddar clause and the labour franchise do not come into immediate operation. They do. I plead guilty of negligence in that I had not in the past insisted on these things so as to make them a condition precedent to the launching out of civil disobedience. My retirement from the Congress may be regarded as a penance for the negligence although it was wholly unconscious. What I am aiming at is the development of the capacity for civil disobedience. Disobedience that is wholly civil should never provoke retaliation."

The following correspondence which has deep human interest was exchanged between Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. It is published for the first time with the kind permission of Jawaharlal Nehru.

APPENDIX

I

Parnakuti, Poona
September 13, 1933

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I am glad you have written so fully and frankly.

When on my return from London at the end of 1931, I found you to have been suddenly snatched away from me, I felt the separation keenly. I was, therefore, most anxious to meet you and exchange views.

With much of what you have said in your letter I am in complete agreement. The experience gained after the Karachi Congress has, if possible, strengthened my faith in the main resolution and the economic programme referred to by you. I have no doubt in my mind that our goal can be no less than 'Complete Independence.' I am also in whole-hearted agreement with you when you say that without a material revision of vested interests the condition of the masses can never be improved. I believe too, though I may not go so far as you do, that before India can become one homogeneous entity, the princes will have to part with much of their power and become popular representatives of the people over whom they are ruling today. I can corroborate from first-hand experience much of what you say about the Round Table Conference. Nor have I the slightest difficulty in agreeing with you that in these days of rapid intercommunication and a growing consciousness of the oneness of all mankind, we must recognize that our nationalism must not be inconsistent with progressive internationalism. India cannot stand in isolation and unaffected by what is going on in other parts of the world. I can, therefore, go the whole length with you and say that 'we should range ourselves with the progressive forces of the world'.

But I know that though there is such an agreement between you and me in the enunciation of ideals, there are temperamental differences between us. Thus you have emphasized the necessity of a clear statement of the goal, but having once determined it I have never attached importance to the repetition. The clearest possible definition of the goal and its appreciation would fail to take us there if we do not know and utilize the means of achieving it. I have, therefore, concerned myself principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. I know that if we can take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured. I feel too that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means. If we can give an ocular demonstration of our uttermost truthfulness and non-violence, I am convinced that our statement of the national goal cannot long offend the interests which your letter would appear to attack. We know that the princes, the zamindars and those who depend for their existence upon the exploitation of the masses would cease to fear and distrust us if we could but ensure the innocence of our methods. We do not seek to coerce any. We seek to convert them. This method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but I am convinced that it is the shortest.

In the main I agree with your interpretation of Shri Aney's instructions and my note upon them. I am quite clear in my mind that had those instructions not been issued the whole movement of civil resistance would have collapsed through growing internal weakness; for Congressmen were deluding themselves into the belief that there were organizations effectively functioning to which they could look for guidance, when as a matter of fact under the organized terrorism which the ordinance rule meant, organized functioning of Congress Committee had become impossible. A false belief in the functioning of organizations rendered illegal and largely impotent was fast producing a demoralization which had to be arrested. There is no such thing as demoralization in civil resistance properly applied. You have said rightly that after all "civil disobedience is essentially an individual affair." I go a step further and say that so long as there is one civil resister offering resistance, the movement cannot die and must succeed in the end. Individual civil resisters do not need the aid of an organization. After all an organization is nothing without the individuals composing it. Shri Aney's instructions were, therefore, an effective answer to the ordinances and if only men and women

belonging to the Congress will appreciate the necessity of those instructions with all their implications the ordinances will be rendered nugatory at least so far as the resisters are concerned, they can form a nucleus around which an army of invincible civil resisters can be built up.

I would like to warn you against thinking that there is no fundamental difference between individual civil resistance and mass civil resistance. I think that the fundamental difference is implied in your own admission that "it is essentially an individual affair". The chief distinction between mass civil resistance and individual civil resistance is that in the latter everyone is a complete independent unit and his fall does not affect the others; in mass civil resistance the fall of one generally adversely affects the rest. Again in mass civil resistance leadership is essential, in individual civil resistance every resister is his own leader. Then again in mass civil resistance, there is a possibility of failure; in individual civil resistance failure is an impossibility. Finally, a state may cope with mass civil resistance, but no state has yet been found able to cope with individual civil resistance.

Nor may much be made of my statement that an organization which feels its own strength can at its own risk adopt mass civil resistance. While, as an opinion, it is unexceptionable, I know that at the present moment there is no organization that can shoulder the burden. I do not want to rouse false hopes.

Now about secret methods. I am as firm as ever that they must be tabooed. I am myself unable to make any exceptions. Secrecy has caused much mischief and if it is not put down with a firm hand, it may ruin the movement. There may be exceptional circumstances that may warrant secret methods, I would forgo that advantage, for the sake of the masses whom we want to educate in fearlessness. I will not confuse their minds by leading them to think that under certain circumstances, they may resort to secret methods. Secrecy is inimical to the growth of the spirit of civil resistance. If congressmen will realize that all property is liable to be confiscated at any moment, they will learn to be utterly independent of it.

I notice one gap in your letter. You make no mention of the various constructive activities of the Congress. They became an integral part of the Congress programme that was framed after mature deliberations in 1920. With civil resistance as the background we cannot

possibly do without the constructive activities such as communal unity, removal of untouchability and universalization of the spinning wheel and khaddar. I am as strong as ever about these. We must recognize that whilst Congressmen can be counted by hundreds of thousands, civil resisters imprisoned have never amounted to more than one lakh at the outside. I feel that there is something radically wrong if paralysis has overtaken the remaining lakhs. There is nothing to be ashamed of in an open confession by those who for any reason whatsoever are unable to join the civil resisters' ranks. They are also serving the cause of the country and bringing it nearer to the goal who are engaged in any of the constructive activities I have named and several other kindred activities I can add to the list. Ordinance or no ordinance, if individual Congressman and Congresswoman will learn the art of contributing their share to the work of building up the house of independence and realize their own importance, dark as the horizon seems to us, there is absolutely no cause for despair or disappointment.

Finally, if I can say so without incurring the risk of your accusing me of egotism, I would like to say that I have no sense of defeat in me and the hope in me that this country of ours is fast marching towards its goal is burning as bright as it did in 1920; for I have an undying faith in the efficacy of civil resistance. But as you are aware, after full and prayerful consideration, I have decided not to take the offensive during the unexpired period of the sentence of imprisonment that was pronounced against me on the 4th of August last by the court that met in Yeravda jail. I need not go into the reasons as I have already issued a separate statement about it. This personal suspension though it may be misunderstood, for a while, will show how and when it may become a duty. And if it is a duty, it cannot possibly injure the cause.

Yours,
BAPU

Anand Bhawan, Allahabad
13th August 1934

My dear Bapu,

. . . After just six months of absolute seclusion and little exercise I have felt rather lost in the anxiety, excitement and activity of the past 27 hours. I feel very tired. I am writing this letter to you at midnight. All day there have been crowds of people coming. If I have the chance I shall write to you again, but I doubt if I shall be able to do so for some months. I am, therefore, going to indicate to you briefly how I have reacted to the various major Congress decisions of the last five months or so. My sources of information have naturally been strictly limited but I think that they were sufficient to enable me to form a fairly correct idea of the general trend of events.

When I heard that you had called off the C.D. movement I felt unhappy. Only the brief announcement reached me at first. Much later I read your statement and this gave me one of the biggest shocks I have ever had. I was prepared to reconcile myself to the withdrawal of C.D. But the reasons you gave for doing so and the suggestions you made for future work astounded me. I had a sudden and intense feeling, that something broke inside me, a bond that I had valued very greatly had snapped. I felt terribly lonely in this wide world. I have always felt a little lonely almost from childhood up. But a few bonds strengthened me, a few strong supports held me up. That loneliness never went, but it was lessened. But now I felt absolutely alone, left high and dry on a desert island.

Human beings have an enormous capacity for adapting themselves and so I too adapted myself to some extent to the new conditions. The keenness of my feelings on the subject, which amounted almost to physical pain, passed off; the edge was dulled. But shock after shock, a succession of events sharpened that edge to a fine point, and allowed my mind or feelings no peace or rest. Again I felt that sensation of spiritual isolation, of being a perfect stranger out of harmony, not only with the crowds that passed me, but also with those whom I had valued as dear and close comrades. My stay in prison this time became a greater ordeal for my nerves than any previous visit had been. I almost wished that all newspapers might be kept away from me so that I might be spared these repeated shocks.

Physically I kept fairly well. I always do in prison. My body has served me well and can stand a great deal of ill-treatment and strain. And being vain enough to imagine that perhaps I might yet do some effective work in this land to which fate had tied me, I looked after it well.

But I wondered often enough if I was not a square peg in a round hole, or a bubble of conceit thrown about hither and thither on an ocean which spurned me. But vanity and conceit triumphed and the intellectual apparatus that functions within me refused to admit defeat. If the ideals that had spurred me to action and had kept me buoyed up through stormy weather were right—and the conviction of their rightness ever grew within me—they were bound to triumph though my generation might not live to witness that triumph.

But what had happened to those ideals during these long and weary months of this year when I was a silent and distant witness, fretting at my helplessness? Setbacks and temporary defeats are common enough in all great struggles. They grieve but one recovers soon enough. One recovers soon if the light of those ideals is not allowed to grow dim and the anchor of principles holds fast. But what I saw was not setback and defeat but that spiritual defeat which is the most terrible of all. Do not imagine that I am referring to the council entry question. I do not attach vital importance to it. Under certain circumstances I can even imagine entering a legislature myself. But whether I function inside or outside the legislature I function as a revolutionary, meaning thereby a person working for the fundamental and revolutionary changes, political and social, for I am convinced that no other changes can bring peace or satisfaction to India and the world.

So I thought. Not so evidently the leaders who were functioning outside. They began to talk the language of an age gone by before the heady wine of N.C.O. and C.D. had fired our heads. Sometimes they used the same words and phrases but they were dead words without life or real meaning. The leading figures of the Congress suddenly became those people who had obstructed us, held us back, kept aloof from the struggle and even co-operated with the opposite party in the time of our direst need. They became the high priests in our temple of freedom and many a brave soldier who had shouldered the burden in the heat and dust of the fray was not even allowed inside the temple precincts. He and many like him had become un-

touchables and unapproachables. And if he ventured to raise his voice and criticize the new high priests, he was shouted down and told that he was a traitor to the cause because he spoilt the harmony of the sacred precincts.

And so the flag of Indian freedom was entrusted with all pomp and circumstance to those who had actually hauled it down at the height of our national struggle at the bidding of the enemy; to those who had proclaimed from the house-tops that they had given up politics—for politics were unsafe then—but who emerged with a jump to the front ranks when politics became safe.

And what of the ideals they set forth before them, speaking as they did on behalf of the Congress and the nation? A pitiful hotch-potch, avoiding real issues, toning down, as far as they dared, even the political objective of the Congress, expressing a tender solicitude for every vested interest, bowing down to many a declared enemy of freedom, but showing great truculence and courage in facing the advanced and fighting elements in the Congress ranks. Is not the Congress being rapidly reduced to a magnified edition of that shameful spectacle, the Calcutta corporation during the last few years? Might not the dominant part of the Bengal Congress be called today "the society for the advancement of Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sirkar", a gentleman who rejoiced to entertain Government officials, Home Members and the like, when most of us were in prison and C.D. was supposed to be flourishing? And the other part probably a similar society for a similar laudable object? But the fault does not lie with Bengal alone. Almost everywhere there is a similar outlook. The Congress from top to bottom is a caucus and opportunism triumphs.

The Working Committee is not directly responsible for this state of affairs. But none the less the Working Committee must shoulder the responsibility. It is the leaders and their policy that shape the activities of the followers. It is neither fair nor just to throw blame on the followers. Every language has some saying about the workman blaming his tools. The committee had deliberately encouraged vagueness in the definition of our ideals and objectives and this is bound to lead not only to confusion but to demoralization during periods of reaction, and to the emergence of the demagogue and the reactionary.

I am referring especially to the political objectives which are the special province of the Congress. I feel that the time is overdue for

the Congress to think clearly on social and economic issues but I recognize that education on these issues takes time and the Congress as a whole may not be able to go as far at present as I would like it to. But it appears that whether the Working Committee knows anything about the subject or not it is perfectly willing to denounce and to excommunicate people who happen to have made a special study of the subject and hold certain views. No attempt is made to understand those views, which it is notorious are held by a very large number of the ablest and most self-sacrificing people in the world. Those views may be right or wrong but they deserve at least some understanding before the Working Committee sets out to denounce them. It is hardly becoming for a reasoned argument to be answered by sentimental appeals or by the cheap remark that the conditions in India are different and the economic laws that apply elsewhere do not function here. The resolution of the Working Committee on the subject showed such an astounding ignorance of the elements of socialism that it was painful to read it and to realize that it might be read outside India. It seemed that the overmastering desire of the committee was somehow to assure various vested interests even at the risk of talking nonsense.

A strange way of dealing with the subject of socialism is to use the word, which has a clearly defined meaning in the English language, in a totally different sense. For individuals to use words in a sense peculiar to themselves is not helpful in the commerce of ideas. A person who declares himself to be an engine-driver and then adds that his engine is of wood and is drawn by bullocks is misusing the word engine-driver.

This letter has become a much longer one than I expected and the night is already far spent. Probably I have written in a confused and scrappy way for my brain is tired. But still it will convey some picture of my mind. The last few months have been very painful ones for me and I take it for many others. I have felt sometimes that in the modern world, and perhaps in the ancient world also, it is oft preferred to break some people's hearts rather than touch others' pockets. Pockets are indeed more valuable and more cherished than hearts and brains and bodies and human justice and dignity. . .

There is one other subject I should like to mention. That is the Swaraj Bhawan Trust. I understand that the Working Committee recently considered the question of the upkeep of the Swaraj Bhawan

and came to the conclusion that it was not responsible for it. As however it had already made a grant about three years ago and this had not been paid yet, although expenses were incurred on the strength of it, a fresh grant was sanctioned. This will probably be enough for some months. In regard to the future, the Working Committee was evidently anxious not to be saddled with the burden of maintaining the house and grounds. This burden amounts to Rs.100 a month, which includes taxes, etc. The trustees, I understand, were also a little frightened of the burden and suggested that parts of the house might be let in the ordinary way to raise money for the maintenance. Another suggestion was made that part of the grounds might be sold off for this purpose. I was surprised to learn of these suggestions, as some of them seemed to me to be contrary to the letter of the trust and all of them against its spirit. As an individual trustee I have only one voice in the matter but I should like to say that I have the strongest possible objection to any such misuse of the trust property. The very idea of the wishes of my father being flouted in this way is intolerable to me. The trust represented not only his wishes, but was also in a small way a memorial to him and his wishes and his memory is dearer to me than a hundred rupees a month. I should, therefore, like to assure the Working Committee and the trustees that they need have no anxiety on the score of the money required for maintenance of the property. As soon as the funds, now granted by the Working Committee for some months, are exhausted, I shall make myself personally responsible for the maintenance and no further grant need be made by the Working Committee. I would also beg the trustees to respect my feelings in this matter and not to break up the property or to hire it for the sake of hiring it out. I shall endeavour to maintain the Swaraj Bhawan property till such time as it is put to some worthy use.

I have not the figures by me but I believe that even thus far the Swaraj Bhawan has not been, in any sense, a financial burden on the Working Committee. The grants that have been paid to it will probably not be much in excess of reasonable rent for the quarters occupied by the office of the A.-I.C.C. This rent could have been reduced by occupying smaller and cheaper quarters. At the same time in the past the A.-I.C.C. has paid as much as Rs.150 a month for rent of an upper floor only in Madras.

Perhaps some parts of this letter might pain you. But you would not have me hide my heart from you.

Yours affectionately,
JAWAHAR

Wardha
17th August 1934

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your passionate and touching letter deserves a much longer reply than my strength will permit.

I had expected fuller grace from the Government. However, your presence has done for Kamala and incidentally for Mama what no drugs or doctors could have done. I hope that you will be allowed to remain longer than the very few days you expect.

I understand your deep sorrow. You were quite right in giving full and free expression to your feelings. But I am quite sure that from our common standpoint a closer study of the written word will show you that there is not enough reason for all the grief and disappointment you have felt. Let me assure you that you have not lost a comrade in me. I am the same as you knew me in 1917 and after. I have the same passion that you know me to possess for the common good. I want complete independence for the country in the full English sense of the term. And every resolution that has pained you has been framed with that end in view. I must take full responsibility for the resolutions and the whole conception surrounding them.

But I fancy that I have the knack for knowing need of the time. And the resolutions are a response thereto. Of course, here comes in the difference of our emphasis on the methods or the means which to me are just as important as the goal, and in a sense more important in that we have some control over them; whereas we have none over the goal, if we lose control over the means.

Do read the resolution about "loose talk" dispassionately. Then there is not a word in it about socialism. Greatest consideration has been paid to the socialists, some of whom I know so intimately. Do I not know their sacrifice? But I have found them as a body to be

in a hurry. Why should they not be? Only if I cannot march as quick, I must ask them to halt and take me along with them. That is literally my attitude. I have looked up the dictionary meaning of socialism. It takes me no further than where I was before. I read the definition. What will you have me to read to know its full content? I have read one of the books Masani gave me, and now I am devoting all my spare time to reading the book recommended by Narendra Deva.

You are hard on the members of the Working Committee. They are our colleagues as they are. After all we are a free institution. They must be displaced, if they do not deserve confidence. But it is wrong to blame them for their inability to undergo the sufferings that some others have gone through.

After the explosion I want construction. Therefore, now, lest we do not meet, tell me exactly what will you have me do and who you think will best represent your views.

As to the trust, I was not present. Vallabhbhai was. Your attitude betrays anger. You should trust the trustees to do their duty. I did not think that there was anything wrong. I was too preoccupied to concentrate on it. I shall now study the papers and everything. Of course, your feelings will be fully respected by the other trustees. Having given you this assurance I would ask you not to take this matter so personally as you have done. It more becomes your generous nature to give the same credit to your co-workers for regard for your father's memory that you would take for yourself. Let the nation be the custodian of father's memory and you only as one of the nation.

Love,
BAPU

II

September 1934

Dear Vallabhbhai,

After much deliberation and discussions with friends who have been to Wardha recently, I have come to the conclusion that the best interests of the Congress and the nation will be served by my completely severing all official or physical connection with the Congress, including the original membership. This does not mean that I cease to take any interest in an organization with which I have been intimately connected since 1920 and which I have worshipped since my youth. In spite of all I have recently said about the corruption that has crept into the Congress organization, it still remains, in my opinion, the most powerful and the most representative national organization in the country. It has a history of uninterrupted noble service and sacrifice from its inception. Its progress has been unbroken and steady. It has weathered storms as no other institution in the country has. It has commanded the largest measure of sacrifice of which any country would be proud. It has today the largest number of self-sacrificing men and women of unimpeachable character.

It is not with a light heart that I leave this great organization. But I feel that my remaining in it any longer is likely to do more harm than good. I miss at this juncture the association and advice of Jawaharlal who is bound to be the rightful helmsman of the organization in the near future. I have, therefore, kept before me his great spirit. I feel that whilst his great affection for me would want to keep me in the Congress, his reason would endorse the step I have taken. And since a great organization cannot be governed by affections but by cold reason, it is better for me to retire from a field where my presence results in arresting full play of reason. Hence in leaving the organization I feel that I am in no sense deserting one who is much more than a comrade and whom no amount of political differences will ever separate from me.

Nor by retiring at this critical juncture am I less true to Rajendra Prasad who will in all probability be the President of the forthcoming Congress, and who unlike Jawaharlal shares most of my ideals and whose sacrifice for the nation, judged whether in quality or quantity, is not to be excelled.

Then there is the Congress Parliamentary Board which would perhaps not have come into being unless I had encouraged its formation with my whole heart. It supplies a want that was felt by many staunch and true Congressmen. It was necessary, therefore, to bring it into being. Such services as I am capable of rendering will still be at its disposal as at any Congressman's. It must command the full support of all Congressmen who have no insuperable objection to the entry of Congressmen into the existing legislatures. I should be sorry if the board lost a single vote because of my withdrawal.

I fear none of the consequences dreaded by some friends, for I know my ground. A tree is no more hurt by a ripe fruit falling from it than would the Congress be by my going out of it. Indeed the fruit will be dead weight, if it did not fall when it was fully ripe. Mine is that condition. I feel that I am a dead weight on the Congress now.

There is a growing and vital difference of outlook between many Congressmen and myself. My presence more and more estranges the intelligentsia from the Congress. I feel that my policies fail to convince their reason, though strange as it may appear, I do nothing that does not satisfy my own reason. But my reason takes me in a direction just the opposite of what many of the most intellectual Congressmen would gladly and enthusiastically take, if they were not hampered by their unexampled loyalty to me. No leader can expect greater loyalty and devotion than I have received from intellectually-minded Congressmen even when they have protested and signified their disapproval of the policies I have laid before the Congress. I feel that for me any more to draw upon this loyalty and devotion is to put an undue strain upon them. I wish that those who strongly disapprove of my method would outvote me and compel my retirement. I have tried to reach that position but I have failed. They would cling to me till the end. The only way I can requite such loyalty is by voluntary retirement. I cannot work in opposition when there are some fundamental differences between the Congress intelligentsia and me. Ever since my entry into public life I have never acted in that manner . . .

Then there is the growing group of socialists. Jawaharlal is their undisputed leader. I know pretty well what he wants and stands for. He claims to examine everything in a scientific spirit. He is courage personified. He has many years of service in front of him. He has

an indomitable faith in his mission. The socialist group represents his views more or less, though probably their mode of execution is not exactly his. That group is bound to grow in influence and importance. I have welcomed the group. Many of them are respected and self-sacrificing co-workers. With all this, I have fundamental differences with them on the programme published in their authorized pamphlets. But I would not, by reason of the moral pressure I may be able to exert, suppress the spread of the ideas propounded in their literature. My remaining in the Congress would amount to the exercise of such pressure. I may not interfere with the free expression of those ideas, however distasteful some of them may be to me . . .

For me to dominate the Congress in spite of these fundamental differences is almost a species of violence which I must refrain from. Their reason must be set free at any cost. Having discovered this undisputable fact, I would be disloyal to the Congress, if even at the risk of losing all my reputation, I did not leave the Congress.

But there is no danger to my reputation or that of the Congress, if I leave only to serve it better in thought, word and deed. I do not leave in anger or in a huff, nor yet in disappointment. I have no disappointment in me. I see before me a bright future for the country. Everything will go well, if we are true to ourselves. I have no other programme before me save the Congress programme now before the country . . .

In this and various other ways I would love to serve the Congress in my own humble manner. Thus living in complete detachment, I hope I shall come closer to the Congress. Congressmen will then accept my services without being embarrassed or oppressed.

One word to those who have given me their whole-hearted devotion in thought, word and deed in the pursuit of the common goal. My physical withdrawal from the Congress is not to be understood to mean an invitation to them to withdraw. They will remain in the Congress fold so long as the Congress needs them and work out such common ideals as they have assimilated.

Yours,
BAPU

Glossary

Adharma, irreligion.
Agiari, Zoroastrian fire-temple.
Ahimsa, non-violence.
Ashram, a hermitage; a place for study and discipline.
Ashramite, an ashram inmate.
Asprishya, untouchable.
Ba, mother.
Bania, a trader.
Basti, slum.
Begar, forced labour.
Bhangi, a scavenger.
Brahmacharya, continence.
Chamar, an untouchable caste; leather worker.
Charkha, a spinning wheel.
Chatram, an institution for free distribution of cooked food.
Cowrie, shell, once used as a coin.
Daridranarayan, God in the form of the indigent and poor.
Darshan, sight of a venerated person or deity.
Dharma, duty; religion.
Dhoti, a long piece of cloth used as a lower garment worn by men in India.
Do rupiya ek bar, teen rupiya, panch rupiya, two rupees once, three rupees, five rupees—an auction-code.
Dom, cane-chair maker.
Durbar, ruler's court.
Fakir, a Muslim ascetic.
Goonda raj, reign or rule of hooligans.
Goondaism, hooliganism.
Goseva Sangh, an institution dedicated to the service of cows.
Gur, molasses.

Gurudev, a preceptor; a teacher.
Harijan, a man of God; untouchable.
Hartal, a strike.
Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, association of Muslim divines in India.
Ji, an affix added to names denoting respect, e.g., Gandhiji.
Kachrapati, scavenging department.
Kalma, basic Muslim prayer.
Khaddar, Khadi, hand-woven cloth from hand-spun yarn.
Khatedar, registered occupant of land.
Khudai Khidmatgars, servants of God; Red Shirt volunteers.
Kisan, peasant.
Kismet, fate.
Kotwal, police officer.
Kudta, man's upper garment; an Indian shirt.
Lathi, a staff.
Maharaja, king, ruler.
Mahatma, a great soul.
Mahatma-ki-jai, victory to Mahatma.
Maulana, a Muslim divine.
Nagar, town.
Panchayat, a village council of five elected members; a council of village elders.
Panda, a Brahmin host and guide to pilgrims.
Pandal, canopy.
Pandit, pundit, a learned Hindu teacher; a prefix to certain Brahmin family names, e.g., Pandit Nehru.
Parishad, conference.
Patel, a village headman.
Prabhat Pheri, a squad singing devotional or patriotic songs in the morning.
Prasad, food offered to idols or the remnants of such food.
Purdah, veil; the custom of keeping women in seclusion or under a veil.
Purdanashin, a woman observing purdah.
Purna Swaraj, complete independence.
Raja, king, ruler.
Ram Raj, kingdom of Rama; beneficent rule.
Ramanam, the name of god Rama.
Roti, bread.

Ryot, an Indian peasant.
Sanatana Dharma, orthodox Hinduism.
Sanatanist, orthodox Hindu.
Sardar, nobleman; an honorofic term, e.g., Sardar Patel.
Sari, a long piece of cloth worn as outer garment by Indian women.
Sat, that which exists.
Satyagraha, "a force which is born of truth and love or non-violence"; tenacious clinging to truth; civil or non-violent resistance.
Satyagrahi, one practising satyagraha.
Savarna, high caste Hindu.
Seva Dal, volunteer corps.
Shastras, religious law books of the Hindus.
Snatak, one who has finished his course of studies; a graduate.
Swadeshi, manufacture of one's own country.
Swami, a monk.
Swaraj, self-government; self-rule.
Takli, spindle-like spinning instrument.
Talati, a village accountant.
Taluk, a revenue division.
Tapas, Tapascharya, penance; austerity.
Thali, metal plate.
Vaishnava, a devotee of Vishnu.
Vanar Sena, children's volunteer corps.
Varna, caste.
Varna Dharma, Hindu religion as based on the four castes.
Varnashram, the four castes and stages of life sanctioned by the Hindu religion.
Vidyapith, a college.
Yajna, religious sacrifice.
Zamindar, landlord.
Zindabad, long live.

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